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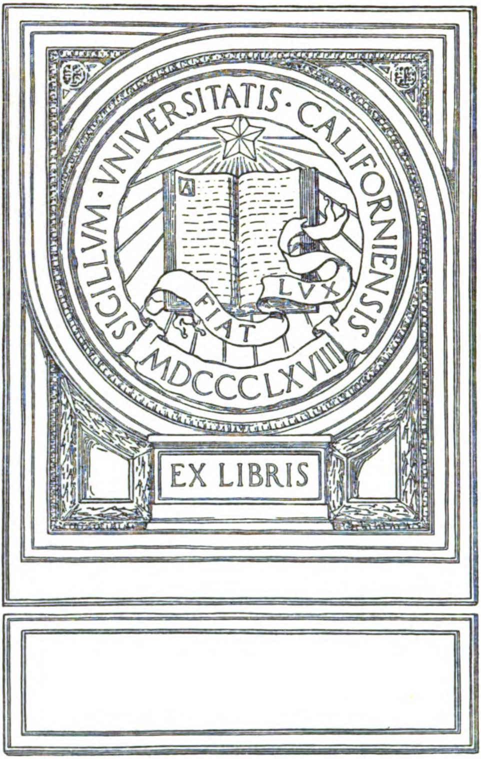
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THE CRATER OF MARS

THE
CRATER OF MARS

BY

FERDINAND TUOHY

Author of
"The Secret Corps," "The Cockpit of Peace"

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Any justification that may exist for the compilation of this little record half a generation after the occurrence of the events portrayed therein, may attach to the fact of its narrator having been possibly the one person to describe, by luck and circumstance, a complete circle round the conflict of 1914–18.

What follows is at least not forced from barren soil. Who picks it up is starting on a long, long trek of four historic years, to Brussels and Baghdad, Moscow and the Loire, to Ypres, Gaza, Salonika, Cairo, the Piave, Lapland and Bombay, to Stockholm, Verona, Amiens and Larissa, to Rome, Warsaw, Paris, Petrograd, Persia, the Alps, Taranto and the San.

The "Crater" is, I think, encircled: hence this attempt to depict abnormality across half the world.

F. T.

1929

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THE CRATER OF MARS

The Crater of Mars

SIMMERING LAVA

One thing only mattered in London at the end of July, 1914—whether Carpentier could beat Gunboat Smith. Ever since Bosnia, in 1908, we had first been bothered, then bored, by Balkan crises; so much so that on leaving Olympia after the fight I well remember brushing past a strident newsboy with an "Oh, damn Servia!" and going on to a celebration of Georges's Pyrrhic victory down in the Piccadilly Grill, with de Groot later fiddling something Viennese to the table in anticipation of a small gold coin. War? Not a breath of it or of Servia from a soul present that night! But approximately one week later I was watching a European campaign in progress on the slopes of Liége.

My introduction to events had come on the night of August 1st, when the editor of a Sunday paper upon which I used to do some sleepy sub-editing suddenly woke me up with this:

"Go out and write up the War scenes in the West End. This is the goods. Inside of six months I shall be having a half-column top all to myself on the front page!" (Poor Editor, he was only three months out—getting his "half-column top" on his own front page at Festubert-time).

Piccadilly Circus that Saturday night hard on fifteen years ago. The theatres just emptying on the surging, twinkling scene; on the pavement a London crowd of that day—young men, mostly what we liked to call "bounders"; "gay" women in longish dresses and picture hats, freely from Berlin and Vienna; a few frothy, giggling flappers running the domestic gauntlet for an hour or two; old treading roués, eyes alone alert; 'Varsity Youth "just down" and bent on a wonderful night; opera-hatted "Johnnies" sauntering with magnificently-knobbed sticks, white gloves, and an air of benign tranquillity; intermingling with it all, the babel and jostle of Soho. Ghost crowd!

Presently a newspaper van drew up with a skid outside the Tube.

"Germany Declares War on Russia. Speshul!"

The news flashed from lip to lip. People paid a penny to see it blurred in the stop-press. Passers-by formed in knots. Yes, this was "it."

Within a few minutes the whole of Coventry Street was agog. Upon ardent youth the effect was especially electrical. Outside the Pavilion a band of young Frenchmen swept by, arms interlocked and roaring—

" *Allons-enfants-de-la-patrie!*"—a challenge which met its match in an answering chorus from across in the Haymarket—

" *Es-braust-ein-Ruf!*"

But England—still insular—had the last word—

" Pass along there, please!"

Down in the cafés and beer halls of Soho it was Bedlam, while wine and lager, but chiefly lager, flowed in unending gallons. German students were doing the goose-step behind portraits of the Kaiser; reservists marched up and down; and deep-lunged Lieder, student songs and " hochs " for mighty sons of the race (Es lebt Bismarck! Hoch, *hoch*, HOCH!) mingled with Strauss and Lehar and deafening shouts of " Prost!" A young German at my side bawled:—

" They're twelve hundred of us going back to-morrow. France closed. Holland, of course. We must finish la belle France in a fortnight. It only took a month in 1870. But your Fleet? That is the point . . . it must stand clear, yes?"

Outside, in Panton Street, a young German appeared carrying a sword, crusader-like, and goose-stepping. An ugly movement engulfed him until two or three policemen broke up the circle and escorted the cause of it back to his flat nearby.

" We've got to go carefully to-night," (an ever-unruffled Bobby is speaking). " They're ten thousand of them blarsted foreigners from every country on earth in about a square mile 'ere, and 'arf of 'em 'ave gone mad already. Not drink neither—just excitement-like."

By the statue of Eros hundreds were patriotically chairing a solitary Red-coat who was drunkenly bellowing something about Spion Kop. The figure was to head a midnight procession to the Palace.

We'd show the Kaiser!

Meanwhile . . . had anyone seen a German band?

That was about the native temper that Saturday night.

It was a strange, unnatural week-end. Nothing seemed quite normal. Nobody seemed to know quite what to do. The season had ended in a blaze at Goodwood while Jaurés was being assassinated in Paris and Belgrade was rejecting the Hapsburg ultimatum. In the ordinary way of things there should have been Cowes or Dinard for the quality; summer holidays in

Cornwall or Sussex for the City man; and Margate or Hampstead Heath for Alf and his gal. At no odder moment, making for public unconcern, could the blow have fallen. That holiday feeling was so much in the air.

So some went forward with their plans and junketing while others put off their engagements, their golf, their river parties and their motoring and preferred to stand about snatching up the latest editions as these came hot from the press, telling now of a patrol encounter at Brody, now of the entry into Luxemburg. Twice, on that Sunday, spontaneous processions formed in the West End and converged upon the Palace to cheer the King. On the second occasion, at night, the whole space by the Victoria Memorial was black for a good hour before the Royal party appeared on the balcony, to be hailed tumultuously. Later, upon dispersal, the crowd peered through the railings of Wellington Barracks at strange beings in khaki, saluting and clicking their heels with amusing frequency.

Next day, Bank-Holiday, Whitehall was thronged: scenting crisis, Londoners paraded the very heart of Empire from early morn to midnight, letting off steam by cheering every passing Minister and a number of people in cars and taxis who weren't Ministers at all. Winston, afoot, came in for the most cheers though none knew then how he had circumvented, defied, a disintegrating Cabinet and kept the Fleet mobilized, on his own. He was just "good old Winnie" and "where d'ye get that 'at?"

Mr. Haldane, "the finest War Minister England has ever had" (Haig), was booed.

"What price yer spiritual 'ome nah?"

Values were already beginning to oscillate violently.

Jackie Fisher was the man. And Kitchener. And 'ow abaht little Bobs—'adn't 'e been right all through?

'Arf a mo, Kaiser!

"Oh, Mummy, why have they taken the lovely Lifeguardsman away and put that horrid yellow man there instead" (this at the Horse Guards).

"The lovely man's going to fight for his country, darling. He'll be back soon."

Just that tinge of Ladysmith and Pretoria still survived.

Others had their say at one another, vaguely if stridently—the popular assumption being that this was going to straighten things out a bit. Couldn't have gone on much longer as things were shaping: at home the Budget and the Parliament Bill rumpuses, the Suffragettes, strikes, Ulster and the Curragh; abroad, war in the Balkans or Near East ever since 1911, and Germany out after world markets.

But very few were even as articulate as that, in Whitehall, that August Bank Holiday.

While at the penultimate moment Sir Edward Grey was reaching, reaching out for conciliation; while Prince Lichnowsky was weeping and Mr. Asquith was striving to stay the rot among his anti-interventionist colleagues; while emergency measures were being promulgated and ultimatums were flying around Europe, Londoners were lightheadedly aware of nothing in particular except that it looked as if something jolly exciting and out-of-the-ordinary were going to happen. The newspapers were so full of it—nothing else. Yet if Mr. Asquith need have had no qualms as to whether the nation would follow him into war—if the country, still swayable in such matters, was already quite prepared to submit to what it hazily considered to be both unavoidable and correct—that was not because the newspapers had seen or declared the true situation. This was too mighty for all concerned—even for Fleet Street, however black and page-wide its headlines. None of us had the faintest conception of what we were in for; were granted even the dimmest recognition that we were attending at the end of an age, that never again would anything, or anyone, be the same. Least of all did it occur to any of us that we should be drawn into it, individually and personally, any more than we had been drawn into the Boer War.

An affair of Regulars—bigger and noisier than usual—with the Terriers and C.I.V. stuff thrown in. And, of course, only one possible ending.

On the eve of the day the world changed, I looked in on that delicious revue " The Passing Show " at the Palace. Elsie Janis and Basil Hallam were singing:—

" For you're here and I'm here,
So what do we care?"

That was roughly how we felt about things that Monday night.

Yet the lamps were going out in Europe, one by one.

THIRTY UNDYING DAYS

On August 4th, distressingly weighed down on one side by a sovereign-belt containing £100, I boarded one of the old Belgian paddle-steamers at Folkestone. She carried five other passengers; and lightly we exchanged individual readings of the baby war—

"Doesn't look as if they'll even take Liége! Getting simply mown down from the forts already, it seems."

Seeking solitude for'ard, I shifted my belt and reflected—

" Odd. One day sheltered in Kensington on a salary. The next, leaving England when everyone else is trying to get back to it bound for a town the German Army is attacking. And on one's own resources entirely. And I don't know a blessed thing about war either!"

However, I diligently buried myself in the British Army Manual of All Arms most of the way over.

At Ostend, the *Etoile Belge* told us tersely of Liége that " les forts tiennent toujours," a phrase we were destined to hear every hour of the day in the succeeding week. A strangely mixed assemblage stood about the approaches to the station—one's first view of a war crowd. Brand-new Belgian soldiers (then the heroes of the hour) with quaintly tasselled caps, women of half-a-dozen nationalities decked out in all the fashion of this frivolous resort, and escorted by over-dressed males; jolly little children spade and bucket in hand. All were talking of the Boche. I asked the meaning of the word. "Albosch—the squat-headed," they replied. It seemed quite natural when they added, "Do you think they'll get Brussels?" to reply, "No. The French and English will be there long before then."

All the way to Brussels the villagers and townsfolk gathered on platforms, at level crossings, and outside their cottages, and catching sight of Red Cross khaki uniforms in the corridor train, waved a welcome.

"Les Anglais sont arrivés!"—the tidings spread along the line like wildfire and, overtaking our train, caused a waiting multitude to assemble in the Place du Nord opposite the Brussels terminus.

"Et les Anglais?" people asked a dozen times, tugging at my sleeve, as I walked across to the Palace Hotel.

"You'll have to hurry up," someone added, "they've just murdered fifteen hundred of us at Vizé."

The next few minutes will always remain engraved on the memory as one's first contact with war.

Wrapped up in rugs on the floor of the vestibule and corridors of the hotel were the first wounded of Liége, tended by utterly inexperienced Belgian girls recruited at a moment's notice. Some of the casualties groaned, others smoked. A little lace handkerchief concealed one man's face. Boy Scouts brought these wounded men fantastic dishes, and wine. Over form after form one stepped to one's room. I asked one of the temporary sisters why the men weren't in bed.

" The hotel people won't let us. It's run by a Boche. We've applied to the Burgomaster," she explained.

Outside on the terrace of this place of suffering, a cosmopolitan café crowd sat sipping apéritifs. The waiter was German, so was the maître d'hôtel.

The *Petit Blue* said " la situation reste bonne." I looked at the summer city scene. A little child passed by flying a balloon . . . was it possible that fifty miles distant a world war had got under way?

My instructions had been precise. I was to go to Antwerp and to take care not to get shut in there. A fellow marooned with his news was worse than the man who couldn't get any at all. If I saw a siege looming up, I was to arrange a channel through Holland and stick it in Antwerp myself. It sounded all so straightforward as the Foreign Editor enunciated matters. I might conceivably require more money—more than my jingling hundred sovereigns—before it was all over. Very good. They would manage somehow to get it across to me. Only: I was to go easy. This show was going to be a jolly expensive newspaper luxury before it finished.

So to Antwerp I went; only to find it really too suspicious and hostile for more than a few hours' stay. At the station, after being scowled at the whole journey, I was arrested by Boy Scouts (one curse of those days) and spat upon as a spy until released following a display of papers.

In the Café Weber, excited and teeming with khaki, neighbours were scarcely more friendly—for one thing, intermittent explosions told them of the continued blowing up of their parks and other valuable properties so that the defending guns of the Brialmont fortifications might have a clear range.

Back in Brussels a day or two later, events were developing rapidly. Liége had fallen, and the forthcoming German occupation of the country was being freely canvassed. The first German prisoners of war had arrived at Bruges. I proceeded there:—

"It is in a sleepy and peaceful old town like Bruges that the tragedy of this infamous onslaught on a free people stands most poignantly revealed. In the busier centres such as Brussels and Antwerp the effect is not so impressive. But here, as I write in a café facing the famous belfry, procession after procession of women and children tramp round the cobbled square reciting the rosary. No man is among them. It is for their menfolk at the Front that they are praying.

"At peace with all the world hardly a week ago, to-day these poor souls are suffering the cruellest mental anguish. And why? Because of the geographical position of their country.

"I am interrupted by the roaring of a Flemish battalion off to the station. Their war song is more eloquent than further words:—

'Ils ne vont pas dompter,
Le fier lion de Flandre,
Tant que le lion peut griffer,
Tant que le lion a des dents!'"

That night in the picturesque little Memling inn I dined with the proprietor and a handsome tall young Swedish Count, an officer in the Royal Guard at Stockholm who had been attending a military course at Bruges and who now supposed he'd have to return home. He was ferociously anti-Boche, banging the table in approbation as mine host christened Wilhelm II "Kaiser Bonnot," with his motor bandits scouring the countryside in armoured cars. That Swedish officer . . . well, well, who knows?

At Bruges Station, rebound for Brussels, trouble ensued.

They took exception to the fatal word "journalist" on my passport and there ensued my first of several arrests. In a stable I was put—had I not been seen talking to German prisoners?—there to remain locked in for hours while small boys cast stones at the door and intimated to passing citizens: "Il y a un Boche là-dedans. Va le fusiller à l'aube!" Fortunately, however, mine host of the Memling put things right long before then.

One's abiding recollection of the Belgian campaign is one of chaos—personal, military, national, with the German failure fully to take Liége until August eleventh as the crowning feature. No one seemed to have the remotest notion of how things were turning from day to day. The situation always remained bonne. While von Einem's officers, monocled and blowing whistles, were mounting the glacis of Liége, Brussels sat placidly sipping its apéritifs. A correspondent's movements, however, continued to be distinctly erratic; now, as I have said, tackling the first German prisoners, evil-smelling and insolent, with machine-guns trained on them; now a sudden dash to the coast with a story for smuggling through via a ship's steward to England.

The Northcliffe papers had H.Q. in the Rue Royale, and an odd crew we were. Firstly there was the important person growing a beard ("I always grow a beard on all my campaigns"). Then there was the colleague who spent his entire time in quest of the missing British Army, a thin, delicate man, all curves and undulations, pacing up and down with furrowed brow and nibbling his nails with grace.

"They *must* be somewhere between Lille and Charleroi . . . I know they must!" he would ejaculate.

"Perhaps I can be of some use?" once ventured a mystified newcomer.

"Oh, no. Not at all," came answer. "It's only the British Army that's missing."

This colleague was devout, and every morning he heard 6 a.m. Mass, by special permission, in the Royal Chapel, prior to setting out on the high road to Nivelles. Yet for all his prayers, I fear he failed to gain touch with French's phantom army.

But the lad I like best to recall, for he marked the passing of an epoch, sported a topee, with miniature Union Jack inlaid for'ard, was booted and spurred and hung with field-glasses and flasks and map-cases. Every battle from Plevna to Sidney Street this Titan had attended, and how he used to pour scorn on what he termed the "American Bar Correspondents." Appropriately, he eventually left Brussels (so he said) via the Schaerbeek main drain after the Germans had entered. At any rate, he had run his gamut; already the impersonal chronicling-machine was usurping the place of the prancing brigand correspondent of yore.

Mention of correspondents prompts a digression to what was perhaps the first personal duel of the War, between Lord Kitchener and Lord Northcliffe. One can see now that both were wrong, but the latter was goaded, and might—would—have been amenable. "K." wanted to run the whole thing without the newspapers so far as correspondence from the seat of operations was concerned. Having been outmanœuvred by the likes of Winston and Edgar Wallace in the past, England's military dictator feared that we should say things either inopportune for his own policies, or that would get round as useful information to the enemy in double-quick time, despite " F. E." at the Press Bureau; also he detested newspapers. So " K." ordered, firstly, that no one abroad should help or recognise us, and, later, that we were to be black-listed and shipped home as and when identified—a wild hide-and-seek resulting from the latter ukase. Northcliffe's view of events I had from him on my appointment as official correspondent for Associated Newspapers on the Western Front (October 7th, 1914). We were in his little study in St. James's Place, and the Chief was pacing, as usual, behind a fat cigar—

" What's wrong with the man? What does he think I want to do? Wreck my country? Ruin him? Why, it was one of my men, G. W. Steevens, who made him! Am I giving you or anyone orders to do the contrary? This war can't be run in the dark like a campaign against niggers. It affects us all—terribly. Kitchener has his job at home. This matter of war correspondents is for French to decide, and I know he wants them. I am quite ready to withdraw all my correspondents from France provided I get proper and untrammelled representation with the allied armies. They can shoot me if I print anything I shouldn't. Meanwhile

—as I appreciate the necessity of keeping the public alive to events—I shall send out my correspondents as I think fit. I don't suppose your lot will ever go!"

Our lot! Day after day, week after week, we were to attend at the War Office solemnly discussing (a) mounts, (b) batmen, (c) underclothes.

In this way we commenced the sorry farce by which the Continent was studded with "correspondents" (perhaps 200), many of them not journalists at all; more, again, camouflaged as ambulance men and couriers. Most of them were local pariahs wherever they erred—feeling (at least I did) a cross between a spy, a briber, and a groveller; forever pursuing underhand methods, and periodically rendezvous-ing with King Smuggler at Folkestone with stories collected often at one's wits end. Yes, that was the worst of it. Demoralisation aside, we spent most of our time avoiding personal trouble and "getting our stuff through" when we should have been trying intelligently to follow the campaign. Nine double Channel crossings were my lot in the first month alone, and the effect of the whole business was that the War passed over most of our heads in a maze of isolated actions, charges, stands, incidents, duly given to you under distorted headings. Yet, what might have been written had, say, two or three writers been given staff appointments at the start (pending subsequent elaboration)! What a story might have been written of Allenby's handling of the cavalry during the Retreat; of Haig's work with the First Corps on the Aisne! These were the real things you never got, and to show how hopeless it is to expect harassed soldiers to write them, take French's own admission of bungling his Le Câteau story in his first dispatch from the Marne. He hadn't the time—also he was too preoccupied. War correspondents are (were) necessary. I know that the ultimate half-dozen who were knighted hated their jobs, one and all; loathed having to clothe filth, death, horror, abomination, daily in language calculated to impart glory and uplift hearts; but these men also realised that their function was, in the circumstances, a necessary one.

. . . . . .

The First Act ended for me at 9 p.m. on August 19th, when a stranger came to my table in the Brussels restaurant where I was dining with an Anglo-Belgian girl who was to keep a diary for me of the impending German occupation of the Belgian capital. This, it was expected, might last until Christmas and I paid

Yvonne in advance to the tune of a dress, she refusing to take currency. However—to resume with our stranger. He bowed and said: "You are an English correspondent? My Minister (he was from the Spanish Legation) would inform you that he has information that all English journalists found to-morrow when the Germans enter will be shot for writing German atrocities. The Germans are just outside the Porte de Louvain and enter the city at dawn." My Spaniard bowed once more and withdrew. Which I did also—on the last troop train out of Brussels, arriving at Ostend at 1 a.m. From here I wired the following affectionate code to my Chief, Valentine Williams:—

"Willie dort environs ville ce soir mais naura pas difficulté entrer demain amour Ferdinand."

It was a shot in the dark, but, as a decipherer of many greater mysteries since, Williams managed to unravel that télégramme douce precisely as follows:—

"The Germans have camped for the night just outside Brussels and are expected to enter the city without opposition this morning."

While the printing presses were turning the above out in London, I was leaving Ostend again—with its thousands of refugees installed in bathing cabins—and motoring back to Alost, nineteen miles from Brussels, there to collect from terrified eye-witnesses details of the first fall of a major European capital since 1871. After which, post-haste back across to Folkestone, scribbling all the way and circumventing the intimate attentions of an Irish Scotland Yard man on the quayside by putting the folios inside the lining of my cap.

In London, I saw from a motor 'bus the first of the First Hundred Thousand drilling rifleless in Hyde Park. The country had got Kitchener, and nothing else seemed to matter. A blind, uncheckable optimism prevailed; in vain one sought to conjure up a comparison between the Ostend I had left and business as usual Piccadilly. Actually, what people said was: "What fun it must be running around the Continent at somebody else's expense in the thick of it all!"

Back in Ostend that same evening, I was to see for the first time a man killed: a bull-necked, battle-bearded Uhlan said to have shot Belgian wounded. Goose-stepping to a wall, he turned and deliberately spat as the volley came. Just previously, a wound in his neck had been treated on the *Princess Clementine*.

The centre of gravity had now changed to France. Boulogne, on August 29th, was in a state of tense nerves. Partly from being left to old Territorials, partly from a sudden Lille surrender of doubtful nature, the French defence on the left wing had disintegrated; Lille and a dozen other towns had gone. Uhlans and armoured cars were signalled as far west as Cassel and Aire. To stem the tide, and marching to the station in Boulogne, one beheld France in the depths, at her noblest—the last Territorials, in red and blue kit of 1870, struggling beneath their heavy packs, wives and children clutching the veterans' legs and arms, or carrying their haversacks. Flowers came down from the windows.

"These are our last, Monsieur!" tugged an old fishwife at my arm. "Look at them!"

Presently, I espied two Scotties approaching, the centre of a gaping throng. First arrivals from Mons, the vanguard of an army of stragglers which eventually came to be hauled together at Le Mans to the tune of 5,000. As showing a correspondent's difficulties, at this stage, let me set down exactly what these Scotties had to say:—

"We've fairly copped out. None of the Black Watch left. Germans came on in 'undreds of thousands. Oolans. Made a stand at Tournai(!) but no bloody use. Orficers drunk at the guns—just like the Boer War. Where's the British Army? Don't bloomin' well exist no longer, the British Army!"

The heavy hand of "K." lying over Boulogne, next day I decided to try and work inland by taxi, skirting via Abbeville and, if necessary, Dieppe. En route the terrified villagers had formed their own threatening road controls. It was a beautiful September day but over all hung the dread of the Uhlans. The presence of a few pushing, freebooting cavalry patrols here and there, dozens of miles ahead of the main Army, disseminated panic. In deserted and barricaded Abbeville was a crashed Belgian air officer solemnly declaiming in the Tête-de-Bœuf that he had left his wife and child in Brussels and that should anything befall them he would not hesitate to become the meanest assassin of the Kaiser *and Kaiserin*—even if he had to wait for years. Dieppe, her merry season truncated, was one seething haven of refugees fleeing from the expected second siege of Paris, which city M. Poincaré had already left, going south. In harbour lay three boats with 7,000 jammed on board, waiting for nightfall. On the quay, a queue half a kilometre long and five or six figures deep stood waiting for the morrow's vessels. Fearful of losing their places, people would draw lots as to who should go into the town and get food. Pitiable scenes occurred now and then. A baby was born and died. Women fainted and children went into hysterics, looking in terror over their shoulders, as if they expected to find the Uhlans at their elbow. One conjured up a vision of this self-same quay on a normal September afternoon—the gay holiday scene, with laughing girls and their escorts come down to " meet the boat."

In the Hôtel Dieu, scores of wounded Germans lay dying of gangrene, untended, following the refusal of local volunteer women to tend the hated ones. In the hotels a number of women freed their emotion by a curious flinging of themselves at men—a craving for protective caressing and the fore-runner of a war hysteria destined to modify the relations of the sexes.

Disentangling myself from such a disturbing field, I reached, on Joffre's " Glorious Fifth," Gisors. Something enormous was clearly happening, and I thought it best to sally forth solo to try and get it. Countryfolk with carts giving lifts—and I countering with £ s. d. To them, I said I was a straggler (I was in khaki) trying to rejoin my unit—a horrible risk to have taken, now that I reconsider the inexactitude. Still, the chief thing was that, fortune smiling, from Gisors onwards towards Clermont, I did not cease, almost hourly, running into straggling Contemptibles who in return for coin and cigarettes and beer and interpreting, told thrilling stories of the Retreat, supplemented by personal and captured diaries . . . fertile field indeed for the straying correspondent. The surrounding of the Munsters at Noyon. The charge of the 9th Lancers at Le Câteau. The capture of ten German guns at Compiègne. Nor should I have broken off such a yielding trek against the stream but for the fact of my sovereign-belt becoming lighter and lighter through incessant feeding of Contemptibles on chicken and omelettes and regaling of them with wine.

What would you? My raison d'être was to get the news for " F. E." and his merry band in Whitehall to deal with it as they thought fit. Collecting news was never, to me, a dignified occupation; perhaps it was less humiliating in the wake of Mons than in most places.

Also, I decided to cross to London from discretion, having learnt that several of my tribe had been incarcerated at Tours, and that two more had only escaped being shot at dawn by a hair's breadth.

In town, Lord Northcliffe had an idea. We were landing the Sixth Division at the new stopgap base at St. Nazaire. I was to be take myself thither in my old car and keep up with the Sixth wherever it went. Ingratiate myself. " I want," said Lord N., "the complete narrative of a single British division in France. The rest of the War need not exist for you."

Dear old Chief—what bright ideas he used to have! Yet how was he to know that I was to meet with a certain Captain Ironside at St. Nazaire? Well, I did, and Captain I. had totally different opinions about my ingratiating myself with the Sixth, or, for that matter, with any other division. Not only that, but he seized my car, did Captain I., only agreeing to return it if I drove off like greased lightning out of St. Nazaire.

None the less, the St. Nazaire episode brought its toll of adventure like all the rest. How vividly I remember the journey thither from London! The picture, in a Southampton music-hall, of a khaki-cum-navy-blue audience chorusing:—

"March-on-to-Berlin! March-on-to-Berlin!"

Followed the hurricane crossing to St. Malo in the old hulk *Princess Irene*, with my almost equally old chain-drive Mercédès jogging this way and that on deck while I read Bernhardi beside her. And the run across Brittany, where our Union Jack drew cries of "Les Prussiens!" from suspicious, off-the-map Bretons. And the ugly cries of "Espions!" that our maps, armlets, cameras, note-books, and

German car, evoked. Once, we ran across the H.A.C. giving its cry of nine "Zays!" to a startled square of natives. Poor original H.A.C.! Its one concern that day was that it wore the same coloured greatcoat as the enemy! As for the motoring, it was tricky in the extreme. Every village boasted at least a couple of armed guards, in many cases doddering old relics of 1870 whose fingers trembled on the trigger as they challenged you. Invariably, also, the villagers would hurl epithets and refuse at you; ropes, sometimes chains, would be drawn across the road; all signposts and kilometre stones had been obliterated; while the highway was strewn with nails and glass.

In St. Nazaire the cafés were teeming with Contemptibles learning how to pronounce "biére" and "bongsoir" and "promenade" and "Mamzelle." In the Hotel de Bretagne subalterns were shouting for "ban show" and "oof"(eggs).

"Oh, la *la*, ces types! La *la!*" Jeanne and Marie would protest, running hither and thither.

Outside in the rain marched the red-capped military police with their steady, halting tramp, tramp, tramp.

The general impression was that the War would be over in the Spring with Russia and the Anglo-French armies crushing in on

Germany. The word trench had not been uttered. Said an officer in the Royal Scots, down wounded: "I have had a bit of war and I don't want any more of it. Imagine your chaps groaning all around you, your best pal knocked out; imagine being knocked down by concussion every few minutes; imagine houses burning, women shrieking and all about the place the bodies of men and horses and blood, blood, blood. I may be chicken-hearted but I only left school last year."

That night a transport carrying 2,000 gunners of the Sixth Division literally bumped its way into the narrow harbour and the men were to be found next day with all feminine St. Nazaire assembled around them, doling out bread and fruit. Yes, the populace of St. Nazaire were irrepressible in their attentions. Once, down the road came marching a body of British troops, perhaps a couple of companies strong. You noticed that they belonged to pretty nearly every unit in the field—gunners, infantry, cavalry, R.E. Also that they were covered in some white substance. Also that they were unarmed. Groups of grinning little children, cheering shrilly, kept step with the strange band, housewives waved from windows and gardens—a triumphal progress. Plus the customary gifts of bread and fruit.

"No pan donnez!" roared an accompanying N.C.O. "They no bon!" (pointing to his charges).

"No bon? Pourquoi?" echoed the bewildered natives. "Tommy. Tipperary. Goot!"

But, as a matter of fact, that particular collection wasn't good. They were our first delinquents, sent down to the base for varying terms of imprisonment, and the white on their khaki was flour from loading up trains.

Next day I saw them at the same time, still the centre of a bread and fruit ovation.

In their wake, from the station, marched the first batches of German prisoners from the Marne. How glad they were to be with the English! And well they might be. For even here, at the base, one saw stray hands clasping knives stretch deftly through the crowd as the prisoners went by. And girls would spit and make as if to cut off the Germans' heads. Up in camp, the prisoners went into rhapsodies of approval as a British brigade marched by.

"Tadellos! Tadellos!" (It is a Highland battalion swinging by to the bagpipes.)

"Our big guns will get the range by him!" laughed a German as Lieut. Hay, the 6ft. 10in. giant of the British Army, stalked by to the amazement of the onlookers. (He got through.

I met him in 1920 in Constantinople, taller than ever.) The Germans looked puzzled, however, as a brawny Irish battalion marched up to a rollicking " Oh! Oh! OH! Oh! OH! You Beautiful Doll."

" Why not God save? What do they sing, your men?"

" What you sang in Brussels—joy songs."

Leaving St. Nazaire, under pressure, on the run up to Paris I constantly encountered British Tommies thoroughly dug away from the War—not for many months were all of them raked in from their sylvan retreats and sent back to their units. In the village of St. Marie, in the Eure, I happened one evening upon such a self-marooned one—

" Been 'ere a fortnight now. Lumme, what a place! Can't speak a word o' the lingo, nothing to read or smoke, and no money. Billeted. Yus, up at the Chatoo yonder. Perfect lidy, but Dick—'e's my pal—don't get on with 'er a bit. Can't sort o' settle dahn to gentlefolks' manners . . . French cookin'? Well, it ain't so dusty, but Dick and I hobjects most strongly to the potiters—spuds we call 'em up at 'ome. Can't make the lidy understand 'ow we want 'em cooked. Did I tell you she's the Mayoress? Well, t'other night, Dick—'e's gone out for a drive this afternoon to air 'is brain—objects to the

’ardness of the bed. And what do you think ’appens? The Mayor gives ’im ’is own bed, and Dick’s been there ever since! Grumbles something awful, does Dick. I say ’is ’ead’s turned by the young ’ussy in the baker’s. They go walking abaht all day long deaf and dumb like.”

And so we passed, leaving this outpost of Empire barely a hundred miles from England yet as isolated as had he been in darkest Africa. His diary of the advance towards the Aisne, exchanged for some Woodbines, magazines, and a twenty franc note, may perhaps be reproduced as (in part at least) reflecting Old Bill’s viewpoint of it all at this historic time:—

> Sept. 5th. Collumiers. After receiving information that we were in grave danger, proceeded on the march. Leaving Collumiers noon, marched 16 miles, and stopped for an hour, 10 to 11, marched off again at 11.15 and all through night. A German aeroplane flew over us and we opened fire. Stopped for food in deserted village. Killed two chickens. Halted on hill in most dangerous way. Marched all night looking for Germans.
>
> Sept 6th. Marched 25 miles. Got French

lady to cook fowls with potatoes and veg. from her own garden. Best dinner since leaving home. Three bottles of red wine, one of pear juice, and 20 William pears on leaving. Slept 4 hours on haystack, which fell in, burying our kit. Lost regiment in delay. Attached ourselves to Wiltshires, who were very kind to us, giving us rum and tobacco. Skinned and cooked rabbit with carrots and onions. So ended Sept. 6th.

Sept. 7th. Despatch rider says our regiment is 15 miles away, so we attached ourselves to 3rd. Worcesters, who were passing. Marched on with them to attack the Germans. Made tea and got full rations. Had to go 5 miles for water. Guns very close, like thunder; several aeroplanes above us. Cast our packs here. The worst idea of marching order ever was invented. Saw rifle in field—no owner. Took bolt out to make it no use. No matter where we go or what we did (3 Musketeers) we were always lucky in all things. In fight by river, 500 strong, we mopped up 3 regiments of Germans who tried to cross. Matches very scarce. Kept marching till 10 p.m. When about to stop for the night found Germans were there first. Fired on them and drove them out killing in all five officers and men. We lost five and one civilian. Some women were shot down by Germans.

Sept. 8th. Went to see our dead and wounded. Civilian was moaning awful. Marched on Germans retiring on Belgium, and were met by reinforcements from England. Officer would not allow us make any tea or cook breakfast. We then suggested leaving the Worcesters. Right hip very bad. Passed villages Chaufry, Les Simons, and St. Denis, all looted by Germans. Halted 2 p.m. in rain. Just got water boiling when had to march on. Day's march twenty-five miles.

Sept. 9th. Off at 6 a.m., action just beside us. Shells all around us. Passed Nanteuil on to Aisne. Ran off to get 2 loaves, 1 lb. butter, 1 egg and cider. Shell passed over my head. Off again. On guard all night beside dead horse.

Sept. 10th. Off 4.45 a.m., through forest. Shells bursting over our head. No casualty. Collected rain water. No wash or shave for a week. Not had clothes off since leaving home. March to join square to surround Germans. Saw H.L.I. escorting 150 prisoners and 500 more captured by 1st Cavalry Division. Completed square.

Thought wifey must be worrying at no letter.

Sept. 11th. Saw large pit full of dead Germans. Arrived Grande Posey. Germans left here yesterday, absolutely routed. Gouy looted. Bought my lassie two brooches. French gave us eggs, bread, tea, sugar.

INSIDE THE STEAM ROLLER

ONE blood-red noon of early January, 1915, three Peary-skinned and blue-nosed figures might have been espied huddled in the back of a Ford, the checking of whose steady zigzag slither over the ice was quite beyond the driving powers of a Lapp chauffeur.

We—I was chaperoning two English ladies—were entering the Russian Empire, spanning the twelve railwayless miles separating Tornea from Haparanda up at the top of the Gulf of Bothnia and on the fringe of the Arctic—solitary link at that time between the Allies of the West and the Allies of the East.

For many dismal weeks in Town, the correspondents' farce of "waiting to go out to France" had endured, punctuated for me by reporting on the Home Front (Hartlepool, etc.), sailing in search of Trafalgar, and periodic dashes across to Dunkirk. On one such dash a well-remembered incident befell. I was walking in the general direction of Poperinghe and the guns of Ypres, when an oncoming R.N.A.S. armoured car drew up, its officer shouting:

"I shouldn't go along there much further. Huns."

He turned out to be Lord Annesley, and to him and his companion, Frank Beevor (whose capture by the Turks in a Balkan war once led to a piquant incident), I was to be beholden for the raw material of what was destined to be, at any rate my major story from the Front—any Front—during those first nine months when I still plied my trade: five columns of the First Battle of Ypres, which appeared anonymously on November 5th (a week before that onslaught had finally died down), after a council of war in Carmelite House, at which I was called on, like a witness in the stand, to explain to Lord Northcliffe and his chiefs of staff the appalling nature of the blow the British Army had suffered, before the risk was taken of permitting me to sit down and write the details. "Are you sure? Are you sure?" the Chief kept repeating. Then: "My God, to think the country knows nothing about it! *Nothing!*" The anonymity was resorted to, lest I should incur the wrath of Whitehall, and so be removed from the list of waiting official correspondents. Because it is so difficult to-day to see what Lord Kitchener had against such correspondence, perhaps the open paragraphs of my despatch will bear resuscitation:—

Calais, November 3rd.

The fight for Calais will decide the ultimate issue of our operations in the Western theatre." So proclaimed Berlin officialdom a fortnight ago.

Unless the unexpected occurs at the eleventh hour, the Allies have won the fight for Calais insomuch as the German advance has been definitely checked. But no useful purpose will be served by concealing the fact that French, British and Belgians alike have suffered heavy losses as a result.

The British Army has passed through an historic ordeal.

Raked by shrapnel, pounded by big guns, called on to face terrible bayonet charges, harassed from above and below by bombs and mines, sorely outnumbered, in places by four to one, General French's "contemptible little Army" has, nevertheless, won through; we have held our own.

The German offensive has crumbled away into stalemate, but the Empire should know that the victory of Ypres—for a victory it is—has been purchased at a price higher than any previously recorded in British battle history.

The cream of our Army has suffered, and the gaps must be filled quickly if the German

> repulse is to be turned to good account. We want more men out here!
>
> If Lord Kitchener's million men are not yet forthcoming, one feels tempted to ask: Does he who is "5 ft. 4 in. and fit" realise that while he sleeps peacefully in his bed a brave little British force—one or two per cent, at most, of the manhood of the United Kingdom—is tackling the concentrated and envenomed hate of the German people?
>
> At a point nearer Dover than Dover is to London is to be found the outlet of that pent-up hate, etc.

The narrative that followed emanated from Lord Annesley and Frank Beevor. The two had been flying for a fortnight between Ypres and Messines, and not only did they tell me all they had seen, but, as a lark, they insisted also on smuggling me on board the *Victoria*, waiting at Dunkirk to take "K." home again after his vital meeting with Foch at Cassel. Greatly daring, too, I even crept up and listened to "K.'s" snoring in mid-Channel—I, a leper, a detested war correspondent, in full cry under the Dictator's very nose!

Memories! Bearded-Beevor and glass-eyed Annesley. Two very gallant gentlemen. Both were killed, I believe over Lille, five days later, though their bodies have never been traced. But we were talking of Russia . . .

Out in Russia when the War was six months old, co-ordination appeared to consist of several Allied generals accumulating decorations in a train at Baronovitchi, and of half a dozen attachés roaming from formation to formation in the field collecting information about barbed wire, trench soup, and Cossack daring (I quote one of their number). We knew nothing of the West or what the West intended doing, and vice versa. Two entirely different wars were being waged, and that comic ice-way up at Haparanda was a strangely fitting link between them.

The Grand Duke had staked everything on his autumnal Galician campaign, and had been defeated—as he had foretold—by Petrograd failing to keep up supplies. Already by New Year's Day, 1915, the "Steam roller" had come to a standstill (the Red Flag in front unperceived!) Yet one had no option but to continue writing the stereotyped stuff. Fearless and faithful Ivan! Lovable soul, simple, honest, clean, keen, sober, merry. Canine fidelity. Prince of the White Arm. Eyes set in one fixed stare of religious fervour . . . . no words seemed too strained after, no eulogy more than his due. Yet all soldiers haven't haloes, least of all, Ivan, whose faults were ever fully evident. A violent nature abnormally held in check by enforced abstinence. Boorish and primitive, growling and scowling and plotting, and having no heart in any war that wasn't a winning one; monstrously led, utterly at sea as to the object of it all, massacred like mutton, no leave, no parcels, no estaminets, no promenades. Sixpence a month pay; 80 per cent unable even to break, by reading or writing, the desperate boredom of trench life; ever begging for papieros (gaspers); their solitary and only joy to continue existing for: the twice-daily arrival of a bucket-of-soup-for-twelve and a hunk of brown bread . . . that and samovars incessantly simmering in the front line . . . could these men constitute the ideal Ally we proclaimed?

Yet on arrival in Petrograd everything seemed fine—A.1.

Mr. Hamilton Fyfe took me to lunch at the Bear, where I met Mr. Hugh Walpole, unfit, Red Crossing, and about to make acquaintance with "The Dark Forest." From a glass tank in the middle of the restaurant we chose our own trout, brushing, as we did so, against thrilling creatures, eyes a-sparkle at the chase. Up in a box, flanked by pretty ladies quaffing forbidden champagne out of teacups, sat stellenbosched Rennenkampf. Charles moved suavely from table to table directing caviare and things. Tsiganes fiddling hauntingly. Mr. Fyfe related how, under an edict of "K.'s"—for having written the Mons story beginning "Would to God I had not this tale to tell" (dissolution of the "contemptible little Army") — how, for having written this, he was virtually a prisoner in Petrograd. Some days previously he had gone to Tsarskoe Selo to try and see the Tsar, but had been followed and requested to retrace his steps.

And so we sipped Burgundy out of soup-cups (I never could stomach Kvass, the near-beer of that day), and I listened to, and nodded in accord with, the optimistic things told me of the 800-mile front I was soon to "take on." How could one be other than optimistic in a capital almost twice the length of England removed from where the moujik was freezing on his feet? We chose just to follow the national catchword:

Nitchevo! It's all the same in the long run!

One afternoon, I recollect, a companion called my attention to two hundred Crossley tender chassis ice-locked on a quay-side. And to my exclamation of amazement, he responded casually, "Necessary graft not forthcoming. So they've just left them there."

Another day—or, rather, early morn—I was bidden to War Petrograd's pièce-de-résistance, a vodka-weeping musicale out on one of the islands of the Neva, attended by Russian officers and their Leave appendages. Squatting, fondling, around that gipsy orchestra, we drank and drank while the tsiganes played evermore poignantly on the balalaika, or sang in chorus till fading away point, till the tears came welling up. (*Ah, but then the savage reaction!*)

One summit of erotic Russian War happiness attained, and no Repington to chronicle it.

I went to Warsaw, in a sheep-skin shuba with officer's head-piece to match, and put up at the Bristol. Next morning (I having advertised by wire for a translator) a very horrible, bulbous, bearded transaction burst noisily into my bedroom at 7 a.m. without so much as a knock.

" Gut morning. You vant a tranzlator, yez. Gut, I gum every morning at diz time, yez. Professor Gruth, yez, my card. You will be satisfied with my servizes, yez. I take a hundred roubles a month, yez. I go now to the school, yez . . ."

The descent of a bellowing bull into early morning dreamland.

" Just one moment, please, Professor. You needn't come to-morrow or any other morning, thank you."

" Vot? You refuse my servizes? You wish to inzult me who would help the English? I am the best tranzlator in Warsaw, yez. I bring the newspapers you wish to see, yez. I prezent you to the right people, yez . . ."

By this time I was on my feet and opened wide the door. Herr Professor glanced round for an instant. Then stabbing the air with his umbrella and with a hellish scowl and elongated grunt, he stormed from the room. The whole incident had taken about a minute.

Eventually I selected a repatriated Pole from German Poland, a timid, scented, blue-eyed, high-heeled little aristocrat. Pan Fudakowski, a tireless and willing helper, turned out to be quite wealthy and the possessor of a beautiful wife and home, his reason for attaching himself to an English correspondent being to escape exile to Tashkent as a German subject; though he *may* also have had some other motive. Anyway, he was of signal service to me in putting into Polish and Russian a series of articles I volunteered to write, tending to show that England was actually fighting, since no one in Warsaw, or out of it, appeared to think that we were. This was another of the prices we paid for Kitchener's secrecy; nor was my work rendered the easier by a British General Officer coming out one day and, at a banquet, saying England intended beginning the War in May.

Usually I would be greeted with this kind of chaff: "Ah, I see you've taken another cottage at Ypres yesterday!" Although, once, I thought I really had met a friend when an immense sheep-skinned officer approached and said, "You English? I know London. How I love your Empire!"

"Yes, it's not such a bad bit of work," I replied, "but you'll admire it still more after the War."

"After the War? I do not understand. I mean your Empire Theatre!"

Ten days after my arrival, on February 6th, began the second Battle of the Bzura, thirty miles in front of the city, which onslaught of Hindenburg on Gourko's 2nd Corps I watched through field-glasses from a church steeple at Zyradov. Principally I saw Germans, in close formation, crossing the ice of the Bzura and flinging themselves into the woods between Bolimov and Sokachef, whence very few were ever to return. But of detail one could see little on account of the snow—even shell-bursts were only heard, not seen. A Prince Woronisky, of the Red Cross, having told me that the Russians had buried 30,000 Germans in three days, I cabled this. But, of course, any such estimate of battle dead is rubbish—just as much as was our claim of 75,000 enemy casualties in the first three days of the Somme, made to bolster up our artillery mess of July 1st. Impossible—utterly, always—to give such figures.

My job resolved itself alternately into trying to hold the threads of the vast campaign, from Warsaw, and sallying forth to this and that sector of the giant line—sallies that often took a week or more, and meant hundreds of miles of travel in flea-ridden and pestiferous trains, among sinister enough companions, and with nothing to solace the Irish inner man except a fearful travesty of whisky sold at 20 roubles a bottle by a blue-bearded Pole. My companion would usually be the brilliant but overpowering Perceval Gibbon, a genius manqué, if ever there was one. Our excursions—sometimes it took days to do one divisional front, covering perhaps 40 miles—would be secret and unauthorized. The Generalissimo, living in a train-town 200 miles behind the line at Baronovitchi, would do nothing except threaten to expel us, while it was not Colonel Knox's or General Hanbury Williams' pidjin. However, I used to struggle through (without a word of Russian, save a small selection marked "strictly feminine") chiefly by carrying round a copy of the *Daily Mail* containing a signed despatch, and showing this, when challenged, beside my passport, at the same time bleating "Angelski." The Polish equivalent I have forgotten, but perhaps it's as well, seeing that the Poles have a horrible habit of putting even surnames in the vocative, accusative, etc. Thus, the accusative of "L.G." is Lloydem Georgem, and the ablative not mentionable.

The Front was bleak, freezing, desperate. The Russian Army comes back to mind as a kind of sprawling inanimate thing; often, right up close, one scarcely saw a soldier for verst upon verst. No raids, only sporadic artillery fire, few communications, no continuous trench line, sometimes a mile or two of No Man's Land, utter calm in between operations—the Russians preserving this from lack of rifles and munitions, the Germans from a blending of contempt and preparation.

The writing of despatches followed a set formula. Directly upon one's return to Warsaw, and after a complete change, straightway to one's room to remain locked up there, often for twenty-four hours at a stretch, while one concentrated on the scores of scattered notes hastily made at the Front and sought to weave them into a continuous narrative. Despatches, when ready, would be handed over to the hall porter, a sallow, linguistic gentleman, later shot as a spy, but who at that time had a working arrangement with the sleeping car conductor on the Warsaw-Petrogråd express, by which our messages would be handed over to colleagues in the capital. From there to the censor and home to England at eightpence a word.

An expenses account about this period may be illuminating in a sense:—

Arrived Petrograd with £8 10s. 0d., and was handed 1,000 roubles.

	£	s.	d.
Fare Petrograd-Warsaw	4	10	0
Military Shuba (essential for getting about)	6	0	0
Books, Map, Papers	2	10	0
Translator	11	0	0
Donation Red Cross Column ..	3	0	0
Ten Couriers to Petrograd ...	12	0	0
Three weeks' board at £2 2s. a day	44	0	0
Week's expenses Galician trip (petrol carts, horses, tips) (about)	8	0	0
Hotel Messengers	1	12	0
Entertainment and incidental expenses	4	0	0
Total (six weeks)	£96	12	0

Life behind the lines converged on Warsaw, covered by the 2nd, 4th and 5th Armies, and everything in Warsaw centred on the Bristol Hotel, backing on to the Vistula. It was in this Grand Babylon that rather a dreadful affair befell one winter's night when the Germans were already in the suburbs. Unannounced, undreamt of, down of a sudden from his car stepped Nicolai Nicolaievitch, tall, gaunt, overawing. He had come to organize the defence of the city, and now he entered the hotel lounge—and drew himself up to his full 6 ft. 4 in. For what he beheld was the third act of a Daly's production—a gaily-lit restaurant of coloured lights, the brilliant uniforms of the officers vividly interwoven with the beautiful gowns of Russian women.

"Take the name of every officer present," said the Grand Duke to his aide, "and let me have their reasons for being here."

Seven officers were shot that dawn for absence without leave. The mad imploring of wives, sisters, mistresses, availed nothing. Two of the last-named joined their lovers in the Mystery before noon. It was about the most eventful and emotional night that even the Bristol ever had.

THE SPARKLING CITY OF SORROW

WHAT a pity it was that the Grand Duke Nicholas never came together with Lord Kitchener before Russia's star began to set at Tarnov on May 2nd, 1915. I fancy they might have tightened things up a bit. They had much in common. Each was a towering, grim, inscrutable dictator, exuding personality and causing Governments to quake. Each had one wide vision, and then no more. "K." said the War would last three years, or over, and spoke of new armies of hundreds of thousands of men. Nicolai Nicolaievitch said something akin anent the duration, and added that the conflict would be lost to Russia through treachery and corruption.

The Russian Generalissimo didn't have the unique opportunity to obstruct, and be African, that fell to his British opposite number, but he was of much the same texture—with the administrative and supply side of his military make-up out-distancing the strategical comprehension, or ability to set this in motion, that he may have possessed. Also he was the same legendary figure, "getting down" to the troops, and by which nations seemed to rise or fall. Like "K."

furthermore, the " G.D." made war on women. When he entered Lemberg (Lvoff) in 1914, he found that his victorious Galician Army had over 3,000 feminine camp followers in its train. All were evacuated back a hundred miles. Such ukases were issued regularly from G.H.Q. A second one, I recall, had to do with the Jews. Some of their number had been detected spying, so the " G.D." summarily ordered the complete evacuation of all Jews to a minimum of fifty miles behind the lines; tantamount to the uprooting, in mid-winter, of hundreds of thousands of souls and the directing of them—nowhere.

On the other hand, the " G.D.'s " women-and-wine edict was not such a success: as well seek to keep the twain from Russki officers on active service as gossip from a vicarage tea-party. The Grand Duke Michael's Wild Division from the Caucasus, when it wasn't hareing about in the Uzok Pass, had one vast harem round Lvoff—and strikingly handsome types both parties were. It was with this Division that our Attaché, Major Nielson, of, I think, the 10th, used to participate in the cavalry charges, to relieve the monotony of reporting on trench soup and Cossack daring. As for the wine side, a good illustration of the " G.D.'s " prohibition régime may be gleaned from what happened when I motored down to Przemysl with the late Princess

Bariatinsky. This lady had, as Lydia Yavorska, been the Ellen Terry of her day in St. Petersburg, and now, she would freely be called upon by bearded generals and staff officers to give an impromptu song or recitation—in return for which, in the absence of flowers, bottles of starko vodka used to be thrust upon our party.

Returning to the " G.D." I think, finally, that " K." would have acted very similarly to Nicolai Nicolaievitch in the circumstance of the latter's being informed by the Czar that Rasputin was going to visit the Army in the field.

" If he comes, I hang him," wired back the Generalissimo.

Nor was this an idle boast. The " G.D." hanged and shot many, chiefly for peculation. Once he had an illustrious string of " Q " branch up before him at Baranovitchi.

" If you steal, I hang," he announced, and turned on his heel, having previously kept " Q " lined up in an arctic chill for two solid hours. That was the morning I had tried to get to Nicolai Nicolaievitch, only to find that, added to his lustre as C.-in-C., was the further inaccessibility surrounding a very senior Romanoff.

However, the Rasputin rebuff to the Court was too much: away went the " G.D." in disgrace to Yalta, the while such of the Russian Army as was articulate clamoured for his promulgation as Czar, vice the poor, pathetic Little Father.

I once saw, or rather thought I saw, the last of the Romanoff Emperors.

It was at Kielce, where we were held up at a level-crossing for four hours waiting for the Imperial train to pass. The Czar had left G.H.Q. for Galicia, and might pass any minute of the twenty-four hours. Meanwhile, to secure his safety from dynamite, all traffic, war and civilian, was held at a complete standstill. Eventually the cortège passed. Firstly, one blue corridor train. Five minutes later a second, equally well appointed. As many minutes later again, a third. At the window of one coach stood the Emperor. We saluted.

"Stupid people," exclaimed the station-master, "that wasn't his Majesty at all! He has a double who shows himself at the window while passing through stations. No one ever knows which of the three trains the Czar is travelling in."

Early on, I was to experience a sample of the manner in which the Czaritsa had become obsessed by the priesthood. At the Bristol, Warsaw, I had been presented to the young Grand Duchess Tatjana, a nursing sistra, and she had offered to arrange an invitation for me out to one of her Imperial mother's three hospital trains (very attractive and full of high spirits, England might have come to know Tatjana quite intimately had she lived). Duly profiting by the occasion, after a couple of days behind the Kovno Front, I approached the C.O. of the train with words of thanks.

" You must say all that to Father Schmidt," came the surprising answer. " No one can leave the train without his permission."

So to Father Schmidt I had to go—a fat, greasy, long-haired young man with a huge cross dangling on his chest and several very vulgar rings on his fingers. The holy man was suspect as a German agent, I later learnt.

Looking back, the position of an English correspondent in a city like Warsaw in 1915 was one of real difficulty. All sorts and conditions of people sought to air their grievances before English eyes, and one had to be constantly on the alert lest one wounded somebody's susceptibilities. If you showed yourself much with the Poles, the Russians would look askance at you and vice versa. Should you interest yourself temporarily in the Jews, both Poles and Russians would display a certain coolness.

As an instance of this delicate atmosphere, I was one day admonished by a Pole that I should not wear a Russian fur cap when visiting Polish families. At the Opera, to rub things in with the Poles, the Russians would have their national hymn played three times over at the start and finish of each performance, all standing. But outside, the Poles would get equal by turning their backs on those wonderful passing battalions of Russia's best and youngest, off to the Front, their bayonets glinting, and chanting in rich choir and unison as only Russian conscripts could. Finally, in the Ghetto you had to grin and bear it when your Russian officer companion shouldered every Jew—and Jewess—into the gutter.

Warsaw somebody christened " the sparkling city of sorrow "—for if, outwardly, life tinkled day and night to music, 'neath the sparkle of military possession lay throttled up Polish national life and—the Ghetto, 300,000 Jews hanging together, from a mixture of misery and pride, in utter gloom, curled and gabardined and scarce ever exchanging a syllable with their half million Catholic neighbours and hosts.

As for your Pole, did you give him his head he invariably gravitated to the Public Gardens, there to glory in the concentrated melancholy of his land amid statues of Sobieski and others of his heroes.

The Pole is not a very positive soul. Poland is (or used to be) a woman-run country, and one which suffered woefully from having no bourgeoisie; just peasant and proprietor, with the Jews or Germans in business. "The Irish of the East" the Poles used to like to call themselves. Steeped in the past, living in spasms, now charming and vivacious, now gloomy and unreliable, and incurably romantic and unpractical—though it looks as if Pilzudski had in recent times knocked some of this out of them, inculcating instead a perilous disposition towards freak aggrandizement. Poor Poland! She seems fated to a sticky time. There she is to-day—sprawling all over the map into areas impossible of eventual maintenance, strategically; areas, moreover, upon which, ethnologically and economically others appear to have at least part claim.

Polish women have been dubbed "a mixture of punch and holy water." Napoleon, it will be recalled, with the lovely young Walewska in his mind, said he feared one Polish woman more than two regiments of Hussars. Certainly during a century or more of Cossack trampling on the country it was the Polish woman who kept the idea of country uppermost by saturating her children in the "burial alive" of the race. My path in Poland was filled with Lovely Woman; by which I mean that for every one Pole who called, with woe for transmittance to England, came half a dozen Polkas.

One Polish lady, in particular, I shall always remember. It was on a trek through Poland—writing it up as a second Belgium with compulsory fratricidal war thrown in—that we were compelled to solicit a roof of the châtelaine of Baronov, on the Vistula. Gladly she bade us be seated to lunch where we made the acquaintance of the Polish national dainty, Pinschki (a super-doughnut) and of Honig (a fierce firewater). On the wall of the baronial hall hung a sash in the suffragette colours, purple, white and green, with " Votes for Women " inscribed across it. Near-by was a policeman's truncheon and a pre-war canister " bomb."

The lady of the house anticipated our curiosity.

" My son was for two years in Edinburgh and once hid a suffragette for a fortnight from the police. Usual Polish chivalry!"

The Château contained a dozen national rooms, including the Warsaw room and the Carpathian room of the Kings of Poland—the latter, a gallery of portraits comprising Polish history. When the Germans arrived, so our hostess related, a gay subaltern, glancing round, observed: " We have assessed this room at 200,000 marks at least."

From every nook and corner of the Château walls great snarling boars' heads glowered down, and one began to get comparatively anxious re the boar hunt that had been arranged in our honour. In point of fact, it turned out a rank farce, and might have been better termed a pig squeak. Tiny animals would be beaten up under the guns, and one preferred to photograph them. Nevertheless, mine host insisted that I had shot one and proceeded to blood me, smearing a horrid red mixture crossways on either cheek. A lasting memory of this boar hunt was the cowed humility of the tenants and servants on the estate. Their normal salutation, if close at hand, was to bend over and kiss the hem of one's coat; if at a distance, they genuflected while passing you. Most of these people were engaged in the pleasant task of digging up a few hundred Austrians who had been buried inches deep on the estate, and re-interring them at a more hygienic depth.

In the evening we sat and talked of the coming of the enemy to Baronov.

"Within a month we had the Austrian, German and Russian Staffs here," I was told. "The Austrians, among whom were the Archduke Eugene and the heir to the throne, were very polite, and insisted on inviting us across the passage to their mess. They were quarrelling all the time with the Germans. The Prussians shot all our game and took all our horses—150 of them—for which they were pleased to present us with bons-de-guerre for a hundred roubles a head, though some of the animals were worth nearer a hundred pounds."

The Countess K., our hostess, was perhaps the most melancholy woman I ever saw. Tall, dark, sallow, in the vicinity of sixty, she had not left the estate for twenty years, and did not intend to, ever, until Poland had been freed. Meanwhile she devoted her whole life and energy to delving incessantly into her country's tragic past and to writing books and pamphlets, never published, concerning its regeneration. Her main joy in life, she explained, was teaching a class made up of twenty children of tenants, soaking the little ones in everything Polish. The biggest room in the Château had been set aside for years for this class, and on the occasion of our passage the little ones donned national costume and sang Polish airs and danced Polish dances.

Then, and then only, did a glowing light come into our hostess's eyes.

I took my leave of the Countess in the Carpathian room of the Polish Kings. She was sitting directly opposite one of the portraits, an open book in her lap. For a long time, it seemed several minutes, I stood beside her in silence while she continued gazing fixedly at the picture, her finger marking a passage in the open book. Then I tiptoed away.

This trek spun out into a ten-days' tour of 1,000 miles by boat, car, train, horse and on foot, undertaken in the company of the head of the inland water transport, otherwise the " Admiral of the Vistula." Each village one found a pig-sty of mud, its survivors abjectly waiting for food or stricken with typhus, to " cure " which they relied on tree-bark soup. I defy anyone to picture greater human misery than I could tell here of the Poland of War. Near the Vistula thousands of women and children earned fourpence a day building wooden bridges across the whirling brown current; and when these were later wrecked by the breaking of the ice, as many Jews descended from the towns, and, salving the staves, made coffins galore out of them, thereby in true racial vein meeting a pressing current demand. But the majority of the peasants had to sell off their domestic fittings for bread. A second source of revenue, speedily exhausted, concerned the sale of peasant girls' tresses—the best hair, said the dealers, to be found out of Limousin. The Germans had carried off everything of value, leaving bons-de-guerre of this nature: " Von dir, dummer Kerl, hab' ich funf Kühe erhalten "; indeed, one only had to glance at almost every second girl of twelve, or even less, to be shockingly reminded of the enemy's passage.

"Has she the slightest inkling about anything?" I caused one mother to be asked with reference to the condition of her child-daughter.

"About nothing, Barin," came the sobbing answer, "Bavarians."

Incongruously, in the centre of most of these village pigsties we would come across a Hotel Bristol, pestiferous, and with all windows sealed from October to March, as throughout the Czar's domain. I remember one Bristol in particular — at Novo Alexandrovno, on the Vistula. Our room, a vast high-ceilinged affair with sealed-up windows, we found illuminated by a solitary candle. In one corner stood a diminutive basin; in the other a grand piano. Two beds, and nothing more. The piano had no notes and was stuffed with bed-clothes. This Bristol was, in other ways, a novel establishment. The neighbouring room was being used as an officers' café chantant, some really clever artists, especially Jew comedians, figuring on the programme. We finally dozed off, I remember, to a lilting comic opera tune with our vintage grand piano in the corner conjuring up Chopin and Paderewski.

While at Novo Alexandrovno, the Polish Legion of 6,000, affiliated to the Russian Army, and then being trained at the picturesque old Château Czartoryski, was paraded in our honour by the Commandant, Colonel Reutt. Three hundred of the company, slim, wiry, bewhiskered young men trailing swords, appeared in the Polish national uniform of a century before, claret and black copiously decorated with gold lace. These were the cavalry, the only drawback being the absence of horses. Then came the infantry, fitted out in the ordinary Russian uniform, the only drawback being that they had no arms. The infantry tailed away to boys of twelve and fourteen, at least half of the assembly being mere striplings.

All the morning the orgy of eye-wash went on. The Legion wheeled and the Legion turned and formed fours and marked time, bugles blowing and standards waving—the daughter of the regiment, a vivacious little girl, Mlle. Helena Reuttnoida, marching in uniform beside her father at the head of the column. And afterwards, at lunch, many pretty words were said and toasts drunk and the impression left was the entire reverse of that which the organisers wished to give. In the officers' mess, the Colonel's wife always sat at her husband's right hand. A slim, pale, beautiful Russian lady, she seemed to impose her will on the whole company and no one talked without first glancing in her direction, mutely, for permission.

Our progress through this misery-land of war-time Poland ended in novel fashion. We had just about acquired the art of "bumping" or of "reading the road"—that is, it would be imperative to follow the chauffeur closely and see how he proposed bumping otherwise the bump might be against you for miles and miles—when mud brought us to a standstill. However, our admiral was a man of resource. Harnessing four horses to the car, he took seat, whip in hand, at the steering wheel, and—brilliant notion—started up the engine. Never before having heard a motor, the horses promptly bolted at the noise, and were permitted to continue bolting indefinitely, the mud prohibiting a greater bolting speed than 5 m.p.h. Moreover, whenever the quartette began to get accustomed to the noise, and tended to slacken speed, our admiral would open the exhaust, and off we would bolt once more, the gallant sailor whipping up our team with one hand and steering the car with the other. But I preferred his less noisy moments, for then I could listen to the almost continuous sing-song of our Cossack guard of four as we traversed unending forest-land, strewn with the blanched bones of horse and man. It balanced much of the discomfort to hear that singing.

LIFE IN A FALLEN FORTRESS

In March, 1915, tired of dodging from pillar to post and having to engage upon elaborate explanations, I signed on with an ambulance unit and reported at point C. behind the Bzura, gambling that perhaps more hall-marked news might eventuate that way. In effect, you in the West never knew anything like Point C—a veritable clearance city upon wheels (five trains drawn up two versts from the line, and acting as a link between the stone age of the trenches and modern civilization). At Point C we did everything: tended the wounded and buried the dead, gave whole battalions Turkish baths, acted as a vast restaurant-cum-hotel, also as post-office—even to writing home quite 60 per cent of the letters sent off, owing to the widespread illiteracy; finally, we were the rallying centre for the practising of all local religion, often as many as 2,000 moujik soldiers kneeling around our train-town, deep in snow, while bearded priests ministered to them.

Those who talk so airily about "the next war" should have taken a course at Point C. I see it all again now. The appalling cold and unending snow of the desolate plain. The incessant arrival of new cases bumped and jolted mercilessly in rickety straw-strewn carts, the straw usually streaked with red. Ah, those Russian soldiers. They simply refused to die. With wounds catalogued as fatal twice over, there they would moan, ever more gently until came the last moan.

As we tried to keep warm in our corridor carriage, a bleak, icy wind pierced our double windows day and night; the snow had hardened and long fairy icicles hung from every coach corner. There being usually ten to twenty degrees of frost and no artificial heating everyone worked and slept in masses of fur and wool. Fresh air in the train was entirely lacking. Morning brought us a regular and gruesome reminder of why we chiefly existed as a unit in the field. Patients who died during the night were placed, pending burial, across the sleepers beneath the trains and it would be quite a common occurrence to see two or three heads protruding from under a coach.

Late one night there was a commotion on the line outside. I looked across at my stable companion, a Polish youth. He was as I had left him before dozing off, concentrating avidly, by the flicker of candlelight, on a translation of Andreef's "Le Roi, la Loi et la Liberté," for production some day at the Polish National

Theatre (whenever a Russian passed in the corridor, this young patriot would hastily cover over his MSS with an innocent-looking letter home).

"What's wrong outside?" I asked.

"Only that they're placing them under our carriage for a change to-night," tossed back my Pole, going on writing.

Yet the nightmare of those upturned death's heads below left another not so unconcerned.

At 9 a.m. came breakfast in the restaurant car, consisting of coffee, sausage and bread, which meal was seldom concluded before our priest would be summoned away for funerals. With a final gulp of coffee, stroke of the beard and jovial smile or joke, the big, coarse, cassocked man would step heavily down on to the snow and then arrange his vestments and mitre. A soldier handed him a book; one heard the priest ask "All ready?" and the procession started. First the priest, hands clasped, reciting aloud; next two officers, one carrying a bucket of holy water for sprinkling the tragic, daily-trodden snowpath, the other reading replies to the priest. Then half a dozen stretchers borne aloft, each blanketed form, the remains of some poor peasant from the Niemen or the Don. Finally, two sisters completed the cortège. And as the dead passed by below, the sisters in the train would cross themselves and the men stand up. The procession had not far to go; our colony was very complete. A quarter verst away was the Forest of Graves, a cemetery in the corner of a wood of fir trees, an ever-growing, silent monument. Ten to twenty soldiers would here be lain in a common grave first thing every morning, one of the two sisters detailed for graveside duty acting as next-of-kin and kissing each dead man on the forehead and, finally, throwing a handful of earth on to the blanketed row of forms. A rough-hewn wooden cross would then be erected and pencilled with a brief tribute to the dead, whose names were usually unknown. And that would be the end.

Ten minutes after, our priest would be back in the restaurant car, sipping eternal tchai and playing cards.

Point C—what a swift play upon the emotions it used to provide! That scene one minute, and the next what should be heard but hilarious uproar emanating from a battalion just out of the line and now in heaven, to wit, in the Turkish Bath train—one of several lent by the Japanese. Each man armed with a branch of tree or bush to beat out grime and other things from his neighbour, there they would frolic in nudity, the more hardy souls even rolling naked in the snow right after the hot room. Nor would the washed mingle later with the unwashed, even refusing to eat their mid-day soup out of the same bucket!

Mostly, in and out of the line, the men played cards, danced, or sang to a mandoline. Almost every man had a little ikon in his niche, and well do I remember once unthinkingly lighting a papieros from the flame ever flickering before such an image, and the scowls that my slip provoked. However, in retrospect, the moujik soldier comes most vividly back as he used to appear lined up for letter dictation. Each man was limited to a certain number of words—priests, sisters or officers taking down as he dictated. Nor were pressing love-letters ruled out by any means; on which occasions the rest of the queue would look on, not betraying the slightest interest in the burning or love-lorn words being publicly uttered for faraway peasant-girl consumption.

I once wrote that scene in detail, with letter extracts, but it failed to pass the Petrograd censor. Odd war! Although the censoring of another story, written by a colleague, I well comprehend, because it concerned the murder, for anatomical knowledge, of grievously-stricken wounded by two women doctors allotted to an ambulance in Galicia. For weeks, perhaps months, these fiends had systematically vivisected the more interesting of their cases Both were shot.

One night at Point C, while lingering over our tchai and listening to the customary harmonising of melody on the balalaika, a fierce cannonade suddenly shook the whole train.

" If you want to see something," said a doctor opposite, " now is your chance. Come along!"

And out over the snow we stumbled towards the Bolimov woods, the darkness lit up by frequent Very lights. Presently the irregular crackle of the Russian maxim echoed through the night.

" That means the Germans are beginning to move about in their trenches," observed my companion.

Another few minutes and a wild fusillade began. We were now in the woods. " That means they're at it. Listen!"

First faintly, then clearly, the Russian battle-cry " OOrah! OOrah!" came towards us. For the next quarter-of-an-hour the firing and shouting and shelling continued, the scene all lit up by star shells. Then, as suddenly as it had started, the din died down.

> " On the Bzura the enemy attempted to carry one of our advanced trenches but was repulsed."

So said the official bulletin subsequently.

Yet that night meant the end of life for sixty Russians, while over 200 wounded cases came in to Point C. All night we loaded them up on to pony carts layered with straw. Most of the casualties as yet unbandaged, soaked with blood, groaning and half-frozen, some with faces contorted in agony, others bearing an ominous ashen hue—it was Russia's war, cut and dried, that night out on the Polish battlefield. As the carts creaked and jolted away over the snow, one found oneself actually compressing the lips as if physical suffering had been communicated.

Towards dawn, on returning to Point C, I wandered from tent to tent, helping at the stoves. There was one particular tent called the "Death Tent" in which would be placed the hopeless, unconscious, dying cases. For the moujik simply refused to die and wounds that would have proved fatal in the West outright, often kept victims in the East lingering for hours and even days—quite hopeless cases from the first. That night the Death Tent was packed, most of the forms on the stretchers emitting low, moaning, shivering groans at regular intervals, such intervals becoming longer and longer till moans would be missing altogether, one by one. Bent over the stove, in the centre of the tent, sat a sister, nun-like, reading a prayer book. A solitary candle flickered; outside the wind howled round the snow-swept tent. It was 5 a.m.

" Here's some wood, Sister. All alone?"

The girl glanced a welcome.

" Sit down. Yes, always all alone. And they always give me the Death Tent, the thankless, awful Death Tent!"

The speaker buried her head in her hands, sighed, then went on: " It's too terrible to think that you can do nothing for these poor men! I don't believe it! I don't believe it! And they won't let me nurse the others because they say I'm a German."

" You are, aren't you? At least they always speak it to you?"

" When they condescend to speak to me at all. Yes, I was born at Riga in the Baltic Provinces. There are lots of Germans there, but under Russia. My brother joined the German Army and is fighting somewhere opposite in the Death's Head Hussars. My father and mother were both sent to Siberia at Christmas as 'German hearts.' They wouldn't send me though I asked to go. They sold up all our home so I had to do something. I became a nurse. They've made me the guardian of a morgue, as you see."

A particularly long drawn-out moan diverted attention.

My companion rose, went over to the stretcher in question, then slowly shook her head.

"That's his last. It goes on all night like this."

One day information came to Point C that things were about to simmer up in Galicia once again. Barred, as usual, from any centre of activity, I determined to try my luck through Prince Lvoff, head of the then very-much-talked-of Zemstvos, or local councils, and so set off for Moscow. The Prince told me the Zemstvos were "Russia's last chance" and that they were being throttled by the bureaucracy. All he, or Mr. Lockhart, could do would be to send me on to the airless corridors of Petrograd Ministries, there once again to watch the rulers of Russia pass by, sallow, bearded, bespectacled, unhealthy-looking men, all furred up. I declined; and some days later had the good fortune to be taken as reserve chauffeur by the Princess Bariatinsky, about to leave for Galicia, with passes, to administer the Great Britain to Poland Fund.

As assistant mechanic I refused to be drawn into mission politics, yet I could not fail to grasp that considerable trouble hinged on the political side of feeding starving Jews, whereas apparently the similar feeding of starving Poles and

Ruthenians would be all plain sailing. The Princess, I gathered, was for succouring starving War victims irrespective of their race, but I hardly imagine that she won.

Lemberg, our first port of call, was also my first experience of occupied territory. To be rid of debilitating problems, the conquering Russians had simply closed down everything Polish, Austrian, Galician. The city was listless, at a standstill; its chief circulating figures being the Wild Division from the Caucasus, looking the part, and the personnel of forty-two local Austrian hospitals whose every officer had to salute his Russian enemy. In more than one respect it was a novelty, this living in a conquered town. The deposed Austrian Viceroy, hearing of my passage, sent for me, and I dined with the enemy in a wonderful room whose Turners and Constables and Reynolds had not been removed by the Russians. The shop-windows and cinemas remained placarded with deeds of Austrian prowess, all were at liberty to wear the Austrian képi, while tongues continued to wag freely in German. The people were distantly courteous but it was awkward sitting beside them in café and konditorei for, after all, we were still actively engaged in the process of killing their kith and kin. Perhaps the happiest mortals in Lemberg were its fair-haired and blue-eyed little children, many of them war orphans, who would romp barefooted about the streets all day long pressing bunches of violets on the passer-by and impishly refusing all compromise save that of the kopeck. They, at least were hardly sorry that war had swept the city, for, as they would joyously explain, "The Russians have not opened the schools since they came here!"

We were held up many days at Lemberg treating for a car, but life at the Georg was not over-dull. The staff of the hotel always interested, giving one the Austrian angle, while our Lydia Yavorska, holding court in exotic raiment, provided endless entertainment with her tales of early stage struggles in the Caucasus. The guests at this time also included Colonel Medill McCormick, a massive American newspaper magnate got up like a chucker-out, round whom would pirouette at all hours of the day a tame little photographer, snapping his boss's every attitude. The tame little fellow also travelled a cinema apparatus and one day accosted me in the lounge with the remark, "Say, who are you?"

I told him.

He looked me up and down.

"Well I guess you may be worth a few feet of film . . . see you later!"

But sterner things were at hand. On March 22nd Przemysl fell to the Grand Duke, and off we set through green Galician fields, encountering on the way the advance guard, bound for Turkestan, of the 130,000 Austrians who had surrendered. The captured staff and 3,000 officers had been forwarded in six special trains to Kieff; we never saw them. But others we did see was the captured German element, about 100 bankers, lawyers and tradespeople. The victors played a great joke on these. They were all requested to attend before Governor Artamanov and they turned up in their Sunday best with silk hats and patent shoes, thinking they had been convened for an economic discussion. Instead of which they were marched off in their Sunday best to Lemberg, sixty miles away! We passed them just outside the Galician capital, and a more comical collection, their Sunday best all covered in dust, it would have been difficult to conceive.

Przemysl died by the sword as it had lived by it. Thirty years ago "P" (I shall call it "P," leaving those who wish to pronounce it Pearymishul, Russian, or Pshemmisl, Polish, to follow their whim) was a small unknown town on the San, ideally situated at the foot of the Carpathians. Then came the forts and fortune. "P" is encircled at a distance or four or five miles by a belt of sweeping wooded hills in and out of which were dotted no fewer than fifty-three forts, seven of great strength. The garrison of 15,000 had to be provided for. "P" grew and grew till, in 1914, it totalled 56,000 inhabitants, exclusive of the military. One pictures the "P" of that day as one long-drawn-out Viennese opera in real life. Act I . . .

The curtain goes up on Act II.

The first siege lasted three weeks in 1914. It was not a serious affair, and the Russian Third Army Commander, Radko Dmitrieff (a Bulgarian) was soon beaten off and the fortress relieved. Then followed a farce for which the Austrians were to pay dearly. The fortress had been stocked with all manner of food and war material, but the siege once raised, every passing unit and formation proceeded to commandeer exactly what it wanted. "P," in fact, became a free supply centre and canteen for the Austrian Carpathian forces. There were no Prussians about at the time and the then untutored Austrian Staff allowed the game to go on. The consequence was that when at the end of November the Russians again closed in, there was a total lack of adequate supplies for the garrison of 150,000—not to mention the civilian population of 33,000 stupidly allowed to remain. The Austrians need never have lost the fortress; as it was the Russians only held it for two months, yet the actual changing hands must have cost the enemy not less than £25,000,000 and 130,000 men.

The Austrians have been severely censured for their conduct of the siege and on the whole they deserve to be. The whole business savoured strongly of Port Arthur with the Commander-in-Chief, Kusmanek, in the shoes of discredited Stoessel, and a junior officer, the Hungarian Colonel Tomashi, doing most of the work. Tomashi might well have saved the fortress had he had his way in regard to a score or so of useless heterogeneous battalions daily devouring the garrison's food. A fortnight before the end—that is the beginning of March, 1915—he offered to lead a sortie, the definite object of which would have been to leave these bouches inutiles as prisoners in the hands of the besiegers. The plan was vetoed by wireless from Vienna on political grounds. One may say that the men in the forts, perhaps a tenth of the garrison, put up a really good show, but that the remainder, and notably the Staff, might as well have been enjoying themselves in Vienna. The General Staff kept a farm of cows to the very end in order to ensure a daily supply of fresh milk, though infants were dying freely for the want of it. These fattened cattle were found by the Russians, and the two captured Field Marshals, Kusmanek and Weitzendorf, were told a few plain truths before being entrained for Turkestan.

Yet it would be unfair to criticise without dwelling on the many drawbacks that existed to a successful prosecution of the defence. Thirteen different languages had to be spoken, and towards the end, when units became fairly mixed through losses, officers often had to give their words of command half-a-dozen times over in as many different tongues. Perhaps all the hard words that have been heaped on the garrison's 3,000 officers were hardly merited. For four months they and their men had absolutely nothing to do. If they ventured out into an open space to drill, the fact was promptly signalled by Russian aviators, incessantly poised above the doomed fortress like hawks, and a heavy fire would follow. Sooner or later a rot was bound to set in amongst 150,000 troops herded together doing nothing and mostly confined to a four-square-mile area. The officers found a solution in lounging about the cafés and in getting an exceedingly bad name. They wore corsets, scented themselves and went in for the lively life of Vienna as liberally as circumstances permitted; failing which, they went in for other things.

Following the decision to surrender, the work of destruction began at midnight on March 21st, when all civilians were ordered down to their cellars. In the dark hours the garrison silently went about its work of destroying papers, clothing, food—everything of the slightest military value.

At 4 a.m. the two great iron bridges over the San were blown up, the report being so terrific as to make the furniture dance about in the Russian Headquarters seven miles away. In "P" itself these two explosions meant the only serious damage to household property caused throughout the siege—something of a tribute to the besiegers who might have organised strafe-feuer daily on the inhabitants. Then began the destruction of the forts. By 6 a.m., when half the forts had been blown up, four Austrian officers motored out along the Lemberg Road flying a white flag. They were at once admitted to General Selivanov.

"Your Commander desires terms, does he?" remarked the latter. "Then this," and the speaker pointed to the red glow from the forts, "must cease at once."

"We cannot get back in time to stop it."

"Our wireless is at your disposal."

"And ours was destroyed an hour ago."

At this impasse, with each minute meaning tens of thousands of pounds lost to Russia in the continued damage to the fortress, Colonel Pnewski, Chief of Staff, stepped forward and offered to get into communication with the fortress Staff within a quarter of an hour. He only asked that two of the Austrian officers should be compelled to accompany him, and that the other two should be shot if he did not return within an hour. Selivanov acquiesced, and then followed a wild motor ride towards the terrorised town. A few minutes sufficed to bring the party to the bridge over the Wiar just outside the ramparts. It had been blown up a few minutes before. One after the other, with stupendous concussion, the forts were rising up in the air, a mass of débris. Egged on by the evident pleasure of the two Austrian officers, Pnewski plunged in and swam across the 20-yard stream, continuing the last mile up the main street alone. Kusmanek at once received him, but at first professed his impotence to interrupt the work of "dismantling." Followed swift argument, capped by Pnewski communicating the harsher Russian terms (all officers to Siberia instead of to "The Garden of Armageddon," Turkestan) if the destruction did not instantly cease. Whereupon it did; it being subsequently estimated that as a result of Colonel Pnewski's Horatian effort four of the inner forts were saved together with the aerodrome hangars and 150,000 winter coats about to be burnt in the market place.

The work of sorting out the fortress's captives occupied weeks. Firstly, as I have said, the Staff and officers were sent in six special trains to Kieff; then followed the exit of the sick and wounded, numbering 20,000, the majority suffering from scurvy. With these went most of the Red Cross. After that began the long work of entraining the remaining hundred thousand prisoners about 5,000 of whom managed to escape in civilian clothes in the general confusion. Following which, the 16,000 Jewish inhabitants were escorted back into Little Russia. Finally came the removal of all suspects.

A supposed attempt on the Czar, of which nothing was ever said, occurred when his Majesty visited the fortress early in April. The Emperor had taken tea up on the tangled ruins of Fort Siedliska dominating the railway to Lemberg, and was being piloted down by an Austrian officer, the earth all around him still mined, when the guide signalled the Czar to go a certain path. A faithful Cossack was sent on ahead and was blown to bits. The Austrian officer was shot out of hand. The writer visited Siedliska a few hours later. The fort, which measured 50 by 30 yards, had 12 shell craters caused by 5.9's, but none had penetrated deeper than two feet. There were five 3in. guns in cupolas, the heavier armament being, of course, concealed in the wood behind. In between each gun were two machine guns. The whole fort was now a tangled mass of scrap iron and masonry. Our way back to the dead city led past score upon score of captured cannon, over 700 in all, through valleys strewn with hacked trees, bones, graves, and the blue-grey of Austrian militarism, down alleys arrogantly christened "Avenue de Paris," "Londoner Strasse," finally past a mass of scrap iron labelled "Die Englische Flotte."

That evening, at the station, the Grand Duke came to see the Emperor off. As the train pulled out, the Generalissimo moved forward, in his right hand a solitary white flower—

"Please give this to my wife in Petrograd, Sire, and tell her that it came from Przemsyl!"

I suppose that was the Czar's greatest day in all the War, this visit to Austria's conquered citadel. What a triumphal entry! Clattering along on horseback up silent, deserted thoroughfares, all windows shuttered up by order, and not a soul, save sentries every twenty yards, allowed out in the streets. . . .

Przemsyl, as I found it, was—knocked out.

Just that. As " P " had lived by the sword, so had it now perished. Strauss and Lehar and their corseted officers were far away—'way back in Turkestan. This was Act III—like a bomb on " The Merry Widow." War had visited the garrison town. The exit of the military, meaning social and business stagnation, might alone have been calculated to still the pulse of life. Far more had happened than that.

When a fortress goes over it is so much harsher for the population than the passing of an ordinary town from one side to the other. Hundreds, thousands who have lived and loved and pegged out their claims in life wrenched away to the unknown; practically the women—and in what a state—alone surviving.

In the river San divers found the remains of many infants; in addition, the bodies of thirty-five women and girls had been brought up to the surface, from beneath motor-cars and ammunition and aeroplanes, by May 10th. Clearly, in a besieged fortress human morality descends to its lowest ebb. Nobody seemed to know or care how these women got there.

In the once-prospering garrison town, three and twenty thousand survivors now walked abroad in whispers, numbed, indifferent to what went on about them. Not a family remained intact in the fortress. Life in an ex-garrison town is very sad indeed. You saw it every pace of the pavement—the place was broken-hearted. Yet it was no fault of the conquerors that the pedestrians ran like frightened rabbits from one's car, or that they virtually asked permission to cross the street. The very fact of their having been confined so long in a four-square-mile area was alone calculated to bring about certain nervous symptoms. Add to that the tears and torments of a siege, plus starvation enduring even now.

Ruined, diseased, and starving villages all around. The occasional rumble of a cart, dust without end; wasted little children playing, innocent of it all, in the gutter; a woman at the door with folded arms and a vacant eye; an uncanny calm, while all that was left of them stood about waiting for curfew. Such was "P" as the writer found it. A community broken on the wheel of fate. In the main street every window still stood shuttered, as in the fortress's last mighty agony. Here is the Café Stieber, where on the day of capitulation three Russian officers took the salute from as many hundred Austrians of equal or senior rank ("we felt much more like *their* prisoners" one of the Russians afterwards assured me). The café is empty now save for the girl behind the bar, still standing to attention ready to flirt with all comers, Austrian or Russian. The ebb and flow mattered little to her . . . she was chiefly concerned with the decline in her takings.

"These confounded Russians with their teapots! And we used to get a commission on the beer we sold!"

Here in this café, the officers of the German contingent of 3,000 used to hold "Englandhasse" concerts at which our Highlanders and native troops would be grossly caricatured. The Austrians used to look on, amused, taking no part in the evening's hate.

Across the way, stood the theatre which the besieged kept going to the bitter end, "The Merry Widow" being played on the eve of capitulation. At the City Hotel, by the station, we lived principally on the Russian national soup, eggs and tea. An apple cost two shillings and a small loaf of bread 1/4. Apparently others had not been so particular about paying. Above my bed hung the notice "Gentlemen officers are respectfully reminded that the management cannot board them free."

There was much to do in the way of opening soup kitchens for the starving and diseased peasantry all around "P." In one village alone we found two score untended cases of typhus. When these illiterate peasants were told that the succour they saw and marvelled at had come from England, they looked vacant . . . never heard of England . . . and yet, of course, we were at war with them.

Visits to the Dunaetz, the crossing of which was so soon to seal the fate of Russia, and to the Wild Division, up in the Uzok, filled in the days. This latter formation was commanded by the since murdered Grand Duke Michael, brother of the Tsar, who forsook his rural ease at Knebworth at the outbreak of war and returned, pardoned for his marriage, to Russia. The Division owed its nickname to the fact that its ranks ran wild whenever subjected to the slightest discipline or training in the new warfare. " Knives are trumps " it was for the Wild Division, and they didn't propose to be bothered with hand grenades or gas helmets or whizz-bangs or anything else dating since the Crimea. A day with the Wild Division returns to the memory as a feast of weird dancing and song, the men attired in the service sheepskins, but dyed all colours from pink to purple. I have been told that these men carried their wildness to such a pitch that field days and manœuvres were impossible, such sham fights always ending in real fights and casualties when it came to one party telling another to " consider yourselves our prisoners."

The afternoon before Mackensen broke

through at Tarnov I spent taking an Austrian Red Cross girl out to visit a grave under Fort 23. She had written to me, being half English, and the Russians having refused to permit her to make the two-mile journey. Tall and dark, Frieda O. was the only lady doctor of the siege, her speciality being mental cases arising from shell shock or fright. Before she fell ill—she was now dying on her legs from T.B.—Frieda had been the bright belle of the fortress and its most adept feminine ski exponent out in the surrounding woods. She was also famous for having given the sobriquet " Kussy " to Field-Marshal Kusmanek, commanding. She didn't like Kussy, and Kussy didn't like Frieda—more than once he had fumed about " petticoat Government " in her connection.

Vividly does Frieda return, even after a lapse of fourteen years. Her confession of how she had had to live with a man she didn't love (the O.C. Wireless) because they all had had to be protected from what she termed " the poor canaille," during the siege; her veritable hymns in praise of sleep as she would lie exhausted on her bed, despite my brandy flask. Sleep was the one thing now that she adored . . . oblivion and forgetfulness . . . and she would provoke it almost daily with veronal.

On May 5th the immediate evacuation of the fortress was decided on. The Russians had nothing to blow up—for the good reason that they had repaired none of the damage done by the departing Austrians less than two months previously. Hastily we prepared to leave Przemysl; it falling to me to spend most of my last night there heaving into the San all the personal property and military effects belonging to Frieda's friend, whose grave we had been out to see. She had been ordered to leave and not a button would she overlook for the Russians or anybody else to pilfer. I also had to poison her dog with strychnine, which didn't work very well, the animal dragging itself about the room. While Frieda burnt paper after paper over a candle, I went on throwing things into the river—military cloaks, mess tunics, a sword, several képis, books, underclothes, photographs, scent bottles, Hessian boots, a toilet set, a gramophone.

Next day I was merged in the great Retreat, driving as best I could through an army in dissolution; through Jaroslav and on to Lemberg, where one heard of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and it seemed that the time had gone by for chronicling the deeds of others.

Via Kieff, Moscow, Petrograd, Lapland and freezing Neutralia—freezing in more senses than one—I connected up again with home, describing a 5,000-mile circle (or three-parts of one), a kind of north-easterly bump, as it were, on the main " Crater." The stricken Frieda I tried to bring along too, but that failed. In Petrograd, while waiting for permission to proceed, she caught cold and a week later she lay dead somewhere in Sweden.

AT THE WAR HOUSE.

THE day I reported to Lord Northcliffe on my return from Russia was that upon which his paper was publicly burnt.

"*It's my paper, isn't it?*" he had almost screamed at faint-hearts who had sought to stay his hand in the attack on Kitchener.

Nevertheless, consumed by Shells as he was, Lord N. lent a most attentive ear to my tale of Tarnov and of the débâcle that had ensued.

"We know practically nothing of all this," he decided. "Nothing—and I don't believe the Cabinet does either. Go down and see Eyre Crowe. He's got sense. I'll arrange."

If I continue with this incident, it is principally to suggest by what trifles the matter of one's life or death may sometimes be ruled. At the F.O. I did not see the Permanent Under-Secretary, but a supercilious young gentleman, who, after listening for a spell, announced:—

"But my good man, this has nothing to do with us. This is all army stuff. I'll give you a chit." Which he duly did, scribbling "M.I.I.A., W.O.," handing the slip to me and pressing his bell.

Now I disliked that young man, yet I suppose I must attribute mainly to him the fact that I am still of this world, for that was how I joined the Intelligence Corps, when, but a few hours before, Lord N. had offered to try and wangle for me a commission in the Irish Guards. My sponsors—these were deemed necessary in the Intelligence Corps because of my trade—were John Redmond and Sir George Riddell, and well do I remember the former, lying ill in bed in Wynnstay Gardens, giving me his mind on "K."—

"A man of Kerry, and he ruined Ireland in the War. Yet what did I ask? Just what the Dominions had—no more. Irish battalions, Irish flags, Irish officers, Irish padres. And they say he's one of the strong, silent ones! Why for an hour in St. James' Palace he was positively garrulous! *Garrulous!*"

My first day in the War Office was spent in sorting out maps of the Home Counties. Still in civvies, I enjoyed slightly less prestige than the bull's-eye-sucking Boy Scouts who periodically passed me, followed by a queue of callers, and who ever and anon ejaculated some fearful travesty of a visitor's name at a room door. Working in the corridor, I was also a subject of interest to a continuous flow of what may be termed "typettes," usually carrying teapots.

In the War House, which housed at this stage some 6,000 lucky ones, there always seemed to be about 5,000 excess staff—of which I was then very patently one. Sorting out maps after riding with generals in captured fortresses! However, I was not allowed to consider previous experience as being in any way an asset. On the contrary it was made clear to me that whatever aptitude I might possess, my previous job had been a thoroughly debased one, to be as far as possible overlooked. So that, on civilian probation while all about me strutted magnificent staff officers, I felt every bit as small as Smith Minimus on his first day—with the additional terror that at any time I might run plonk into Lord Kitchener whose room lay but a few yards away. And that would have been akin to colliding with the Deity itself.

Only one officer spoke to me, outside of routine, during the first week. This was he who kept up the King's Order of Battle Map, his job being to go across to Buckingham Palace at six each evening and correct things up. "At one time," I was subsequently admitted into the higher mysteries, "we rather got the breeze up about showing so much secret stuff on it. So many people are received in audience, you know. Now, however, the King keeps it covered over when he doesn't require it."

But this is to digress from the main and grand theme of the War House during a war, when daily, hourly, every minute, buff slips and files and memoranda would be piled on the records and jackets of Malplaquet and Torres Vedras, down in the basement. Verily, here was the hub of the paper war—with not a word spoken of responsibility ever uttered, always written down in duplicate. Duplication, in fact, ruled supreme: duplication of work no less than of memoranda. Thus, " Intelligence " at the War House (Home Defence) duplicated the work of locating hostile submarines being done, naturally much better, over at the Admiralty. With a vast map of the North Sea beside him, the Intelligence Officer on night duty in the War House would slumber on a camp bed in between awakenings by orderlies, when he would plot the positions of marauding U-boats from wireless bearings or as derived from other sources. Little pins with flag heads would be stuck in the chart . . . shall I forget them? For did not I once sweep the whole collection of pins pêle mêle on to the floor, with my blanket, on leaping from that camp bed one morning I had overslept?

Still, working quiveringly at top speed—the Major was due in at any moment—I managed to stick all the pins in again, anyhow, and no one noticed any difference all that morning; until, in fact, I had corrected up the little flags, from the Admiralty, during the luncheon interval. Then a difference *was* noted. But I knew nothing. A white lie. But so necessary. The main thing was that Home Defence could read the North Sea aright once more.

Not long after this so-narrow shave, the first Intelligence class was formed (of nineteen officers and one civilian) and I set to work, up in hutments on the roof, to get to know all about the German Army. It was like going back to school. We sat at desks, in awe before our instructor, spoke in whispers, and filled copybooks. Our main occupation, however, was keeping up-to-date the Yellow Book of the German Forces in the Field, a truly wondrous compilation. Sometimes we went map-reading—to Hendon or to the Hog's Back. It was up on the roof of the War House that I rediscovered what an extraordinarily good collection of fellows the British Isles could casually produce. My civilian clothes didn't matter in the least. On the contrary, once when I was lunching with three of the class in a West End restaurant, and a buxom wench saw fit to approach me with a white feather, my neighbour rose in some dudgeon, pursued the hen, and holding the feather to her face, stammered with conviction:—

"*I'd like to tickle your blinking throat with it!*"

After a few weeks St. Omer began clamouring for our brains and bodies, so an intelligence test was set to try and sift us out. In this I think I came out very nearly where I used to be in drawing. The idea was that the Germans had invaded Norfolk and were descending upon London. Teacher had worked the whole thing out and from his desk he would read slips, meant to be telegrams to our Home Defence, such as:—

"Fourth Jaeger zu Pferde identified at Colchester."

From these manifold slips we were supposed to disentangle everything and chart what enemy forces were descending upon the capital, and in what order and formation. I have my chart before me as I write. From it, it would appear that I got most of the invading force about the same time in the main street of Ipswich. But no matter. Another test was coming, and in this, I came out—slightly higher.

One day in July, teacher stared at me and said:—

"There are far too many munition fires occurring. Downstairs you'll find a trunk full of reports. I want a brief memorandum by Monday morning."

My report was so brief that it won teacher's unbounded admiration. It read:—

There have been over 200 fires this year in munition and war material factories. Three-quarters of these outbreaks occurred during the week-end. Suggestion: that an increased week-end patrol be instituted."

"You will report at St. Omer on Thursday," said teacher enthusiastically. "I shall have you gazetted to-morrow."

"But I haven't any kit, sir."

"Well, can't you get it between this and then?"

I did get it all right—but, oh, the horrors of anticipation of that first salute! Before the glass I rehearsed it. And totally overlooked a second problem—that of putting on one's first puttees. The train was leaving Victoria at 8 a.m. From 4 a.m. onwards I wound and unwound. Finally I dashed out and along Oxford Street and collared the first policeman.

"Are you an ex-army lad?" I very nearly gasped. "Then for heaven's sake come along and put on my puttees!"

INTELLIGENCE, YPRES

My first night on active service was spent, under an air raid, at the Hôtel de Commerce, St. Omer. The waiting wenches, famous girls, hid under beds. That Kismet of rawness still blithely upon us, we nonchalantly continued to drink champagne. Next morning Captain Cox started intensively to cram our class of five. Captain Cox, a thirty-five-year-old R.E. Regular, in November, 1917, became head of our Intelligence in France, only to suffer a nervous breakdown at the height of his work the May following. He later met with a tragic death at Wimereux, being drowned while bathing. Brigadier-General Cox (as he became) was not only our best Intelligence brain in France, he was also the nicest senior officer in the branch that I came to know. Quick, incisive, sound. Here he is on " German prisoners and how to deal with them ":—

> If there's a lot, first sort them into regiments. Give words of command as if you were a German officer. Take them one by one. Don't send examined men back to the original group. Do first twelve urgent and general questions and see to instant priority of your

message. Then you can mess about. For disposition of troops, ask old hands. Keep officers and N.C.O.'s apart from men. Remember to employ different methods with different men. Your final word should be a threat to 'send them to the French' if they won't answer. (Our Allies used to strip recalcitrant ones naked and shove them back among their fellows, the notion being complete moral debasement.) Some men only need a word of encouragement. But there's also the fellow you must bully. Beware of the cute fellow who pretends to be stupid. Stand no nonsense from officers. Treat them as the men. No bond of chivalry *now*.'

Not very many days later I was to attempt to put these tenets into practice among the first prisoners of Loos, for which occasion I was lent, plus motor-bicycle, to a neighbouring attacking Corps. My own Corps, to which I had been allotted, was the Sixth, then holding the north and centre of the Ypres Salient, with H.Q. at the Château la Lôvie, near "Pop."

What a break with all things, it was, motor-cycling out to Lôvie for the first time!

The Château was a massive, square, white, modern block, with a large Flemish family still in residence, where the General Staff was not.

This latter numbered twenty odd, I sharing an Armstrong hut with the Corps Commander's junior A.D.C. But Intelligence had a vast office, an immense hall which used to act as ballroom, and very senior B Mess being installed in one corner of this, they could not do otherwise than bid the newcomer "civilian helper" to their board; and fortunately I had been prewarned not as much as to dare open my lips without first being addressed. However, the majority of these professionals in their element were inclined to judge newcomers on their own showing. They also had an ulterior reason for letting me down lightly in that I was soon detailed to go off twice a week in the wretchedness of Flanders five a.m. to market for the mess at Hazebrouck (in a mess of ten, five rations were drawn, French food being bought with a pooling of the allowances derived from not drawing the other five rations). Yes, upon due consideration, if you bear in mind the horrific fact of a scribe's descent amid Camberley and Quetta—especially Quetta—I think B Mess was almost human. Shop, i.e., the War, i.e. the Only Thing that we were all living for, being strictly taboo, conversation was limited to subjects such as ratting, musical comedy, Kirschner, and to gossip based on the smart illustrated weeklies.

An Intelligence Officer at Ypres at this stage had his hands fairly full. Popularly, our only job was supposed to be editing Comic Cuts, alias the daily summary of events in the Corps' sector; actually I often got this out in half-an-hour of an evening. Nor was Comic Cuts, despite its lapses and Olympian note, so exclusively humorous. As sole link between all branches—gunners, sappers, infantry, airmen—regarding the enemy and what he was up to, it could not have been dispensed with.

The senior I.O.'s job was exclusively the extremely important one of reading air photographs of the enemy's trench system, and mapping every alteration, even to a new mound of earth, my senior ultimately becoming so expert that he could follow with a magnifying glass the tracks of buried cables. He also kept files, because I never could. Files of captured documents, of prisoners' statements, of agents' reports, and of the expansion of the German Army. I, for my part, had to take on prisoners in examination; keep up the enemy's Order of Battle map; go out listening at night near the German wire; collect dud German shells for forwarding for laboratory research at St. Omer; tap the morale of our own men by opening green envelopes; liaison with our local Intelligence Police watching the civilian population; aid with

Comic Cuts and in the general work of the office; and stand by for odd stunts.

Opening the green envelopes had its humours. Once I came across this (it had evidently been forwarded for information to some one in line who was now returning to its authoress with scathing accompaniments):—

> Dear Sir respected Sir,
>
> Though I take this liberty as it leaves me at present I beg to ask you if you will be kindly be kind enough to let me knew where is my husbin though he is not my legible husbin as has a wife though he says she is dead, but I do not think he knows for sure but we are not married though I am getting my alotment regular which is no fault of Mr. Lloy Georges who would stop it if he could or Mr. Makena but if you know where he is as he belongs to the Royal Fling Corps for since he joined in when he was sacked from his work for talking back to his Bos which was a woman at the laundry where he worked I have not had any money from him since he joined though he told Mrs. Harris which lives on the ground floor that he was a pretty ossifer for six shillings a week and lots of underclosse in for the bad weather and I have three children what he has been the father of,

Hoping you will write to me soon and you are quite well as it leaves me at present I must close now hoping you are well.

(Signed) MRS. JANE JENKINS.

With prisoners, I may have been among the first to dispose of armed guards and truculence, my system, such as it was, having been rather to seat the captive, offer him a cigarette, and chat, without dreaming or taking a note in his presence. A tone of good-natured raillery suited many captured Germans; moreover these could almost always be made to speak if you manœuvred them into boasting. Threats, or grilling, I found useless, in which connection I well recall an incident at Lôvie when a senior sahib of B Mess, whose unit had been gassed out of existence the previous April, insisted on making all preparations for the fake gassing of a German prisoner who refused to answer my questions. We were in a stable, and Major X. had all present don gas masks. He was about to bring in a hose and proceed with the mental torture, when I slipped out and rang the A.P.M., to whom all captives' bodies belonged, and so ended matters.

A fine fellow who used to love to come and tackle German officers with me was Brigadier-General Shepard, commanding the 1st Brigade, R.F.C., and who started off as a Fusilier captain. Slight, wiry and very young, Shepard had colloquial German at his finger-tips—indeed had been a useful agent of ours in days of peace, work that had made him the companion of Erskine Childers when that brave but tragic hybrid went to look over the waters of the Frisian Isles and, incidentally, collected there material for his famous "Riddle of the Sands." Shepard was killed while flying to a mess that had invited him to dinner and a big loss he was to the brainy side of the air war in France.

The French drew up a stock catechism for captured Germans. Here is the backbone of it:—

Name? Age? When did you enter the service? Where were you called up? Of what regiments is that the depôt? Were you put through an instructional camp? Where? How long? How many times did you shoot there? When did you leave for Belgium? Which way did you go? Charleroi? Brussels? Mons? Tournai? How many men made the journey with you? Were there many other trains? Were they all for the same regiment? Were they all of the same age as you? Were there any men of the Landwehr? Were these men of the Landwehr of the 1st or 2nd ban? Were there any men of the Landsturm? Were there any wounded men returning after recovery? By whom were you conducted? Where were you first sent to in Belgium? Were there other troops at that camp? Do you remember their number? Were there not any high numbers: 250, 260, 280, 290? Had these troops already been under fire, or were they waiting, like you, to go into the firing line? When were you under fire for the first time? What did your officers say to you? Did they tell you that it would be easy to dislodge the French? Did they tell you that it would be easy to dislodge the English? What did they say to you on the subject of the soldiers of the country? Do you remember that they told you not to take prisoners? Had you orders to fire on those who wished to surrender? Did they order you above all not to spare the English? Is it difficult to gain the Iron Cross? What must one do to gain it? Had the Captain any Iron Crosses with him, or was it necessary to wait a long time until the Kaiser sent it you? How long? Were many of your comrades killed? Were many of your officers killed? How many in your company? Had your company already suffered losses before your arrival? What strength of reinforcements arrived with you? What did the men you reinforced say? How was it explained to you that the German Army did not advance? Did you receive any letters from home? Any newspapers? What did they think, at home? Were you afraid of being taken prisoner? Did they tell you that you would be ill-treated in France? Did they tell you that you would be ill-treated in England? Would you rather have been sent to the Russian front? How were you fed? Did you find things easily in the villages? What did your officers say to you on the subject of the French villagers? Did they tell you not to be shy about taking whatever you pleased? Were you given the order to shoot all suspects? Did you not feel grieved to have to carry out such a task by order? Have you thought of reprisals on your own families, if the Allies enter Germany? At the time of the battle, where were you? What were the effects of our artillery? Of our bombs? Of our infantry fire? Were there many men with you? How long had you been there? Disposition of the troops in the trenches? Occupation of the 1st Line? 2nd Line? Where are the reserves? Communication trenches? Where are the officers? How long does your tour of duty in the trenches last? Was all the battalion there? Was all the regiment there? What regiment lay on your right and on your left? What regiment was in reserve? Where was the rest camp of the regiment? What was your total fighting strength?

How many men of the Ersatz were there? How many of the class of 1914? Or of 1915? What was the name of your Colonel? How many active officers were there in your company? How many reserve officers were there in your company? Do you make use of children for espionage? Did you easily find women for the purpose of espionage?

The summit, the ideal to be aimed at, was to hoodwink the enemy by dressing up and masquerading as one of his very own. At "Pop," in 1915, we tried this on, but not with very good results. Our man, a perfect German scholar, had his head shaved, was put in splints and into a bed next that of a wounded German officer with whom he was able to fraternise all right . . . only next morning, when that insane 5 a.m. washing-time came round, the good sister—in the know—burst out into fits of laughter at the mimicked pain of the masquerader . . . and the real German's eyes were opened.

Home on leave a little later, the unsuccessful one sent me a postcard across which was scrawled, reference the state of his head: "I had to tell them I caught ringworm."

Looking back, the War had humour in it—almost for all. Perhaps that was principally why its trench participants were spared from becoming raving lunatics—and at that, we certainly had the humour grain more developed, and blessedly so, than any other of the Allies until the coming of the Yanks. Such humour as Bairnsfather's made the French, when they saw it, curl up in pained surprise verging on something stronger. So that was how we were taking the War—just playing at it! Here, in effect, was a direct clashing of mentalities unbridgeable by even a whole battalion of the suavest liaison officers; a clashing as direct as that which arose in 1915, when native eye witnesses reported to G.Q. at Chantilly that the English had been seen fox-hunting behind the lines. We had to stop that, but not before the most unfortunate precedent had been cited of Wellington in the Peninsula!

But to proceed with the humour of "I" . . . How could one forbear from laughing when sent out in search of a feminine suspect whose characteristics were pop eyes, a chocolate mole in the small of her back, and the name of Celeste? Or at that priceless answer of a certain C.O. in line, to whom I was once sent to ask the seemingly inane question:—

"What is the attitude of the enemy in your sector, sir?"

"The attitude of the enemy in my sector," replied that C.O., pausing over his tea, "continues to be distinctly hostile."

I remember, too, my first listening turn of duty—and what I heard on it. The idea was for those of us who knew German well to go out and crawl up to the German wire, there to lie and listen in the darkness for items of tactical or strategical import as discussed by Fritz in his front line. I had been barely a fortnight in France when I was ordered out on this tricky job for the first time and well do I recall the end-of-all-things feeling which overcame me as the fatal words fell from my G.S.O.'s lips:—

"I want you to go out in front to-night, Tuohy—Hindenburg Farm—and listen to what the Huns are saying. You're to report at 4th Brigade on the Canal Bank at ten o'clock. They'll have arranged for guides."

Over to my Armstrong hut I went, and flung myself down much as a condemned man must do on returning from hearing sentence.

So this was going to be the end of it all! Killed to-night, aged twenty-four. On an asinine stunt which wouldn't advance the War one hair's breadth! But no protest possible. Not one solitary word. Just on to my Douglas for Ypres at nine thirty.

At mess they joshed me about things, particularly one Staff fellow then sitting at the nearest point he probably ever got to the Line.

"Well, well! So the civilian helper's going to see a bit of war to-night, eh?"

At ten I was on the Canal Bank.

"I don't see why I should risk two of my men on this damned stupid rot," the Brigadier said. "Still, I suppose one has to do what Division and Corps say. Major, see this officer gets what he requires, will you?"

So we went, slowly and toilsomely up through the slush of Oxford Street communication trench and out on top (making the clearest of targets under the Very lights) where the "trench" ended in a sea of mud. And I crawled out on my belly across No Man's Land between the two guides allotted to me from the company in that sector. As we lay with Very lights bursting above us and bullets spitting across us, my chief concern was lest a pair of treacherous, primitive Newton Pippin bombs, one of which I had in either pocket, should go off as I wriggled this way and that. So many of the confounded things had done so before—blowing holes in their owners' anatomies. As for the listening, my report for that night read as follows:—

> "Went to A.21.d.4.3, got to wire, lay concealed from 12.30 a.m. to 3 a.m. Heard several working parties, including German

N.C.O.'s swearing at men. Also heard long dispute right in front over a girl at Coblenz."

Yet there was one job in "I" at this time which I disliked even more cordially than listening. That had to do with the collection of dud German shells (for chemical research), because these might go off at any second, and C.O.'s absolutely refused to detail men to help in digging them out. I can imagine no more distressing way of spending an afternoon than bent over a dud in the mud of the Salient, trying to ooze it out.

As winter set in I was lucky to have, among battalion intelligence officers to instruct, two former colleagues. Both were in the alleged trenches before Ypres, and we evolved the notion of getting out a Christmas number of some kind. This later emerged, with a Roneo-d circulation of a couple of hundred or so, as "The Salient" from which I take these haphazard contributions as being perhaps of interest for their resuscitation of the humour and outlook of that distant day:

An A.B.C. to the Army

No. I. *Regular.*

A totally extinct force which flourished before the war. It consisted of pipe-clay and metal polish with a man inside to give it more effect. Strange as it may seem, after the war broke out the man was discovered to be of more importance than the pipe-clay.

No. 1 (*a*). *Yeomanry.*

These are horse-soldiers, and can only be differentiated from fraudulent wearers of riding breeches by spurs.

No. 2. *Territorial Force.*

An apparatus whereby an undeserving War Office may be able to summon a complete army in divisions at twenty-four hours' notice. By the terms of its formation, it is forbidden that it should ever receive any credit for its work. Its official designation is "Saturday night soldiers."

No. 3. *Kitchener's Army.*

This is a large departmental interment camp for young men between the ages of 19 and 38. Monotony of existence is relieved by movement to different places in England. Isolated units have been found in France.

No. 4. *City Battalion.*

(*See* England's Last Hope).

No. 5. R.A.M.C.

A party of men lured into Belgium under false pretences. Ostensibly for the purpose of practising the healing art, they lead a precarious existence with a spade. For further particulars see "Navvies' Battalion" (except pay).

No. 6. A.S.C.

(Technically known as the "Strawberry Jam Pinchers.") Predatory pirates who lead a life of filibustering. They have a habit of becoming "attached" to regiments, which may account for their habit of attaching themselves to rations. Act as "clearing station" for all rations.

No. 7. M.T.

A collection of eccentricities from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Wiltshire, Lancashire and London. Very little is known of these, as an interpreter is needed to speak to any of them.

No. 8. A.O.C.

Ordnance is ancient English for cannon. In consequence, this unit is rarely found within sound of the guns. Though frequently found "in the dumps," they are, on the whole, a cheerful crew. They affect bright buttons and are the arbiter of fashion in the army.

No. 9. *Engineers.*

Otherwise known as the "Press-gang." Isolated members of this Corps have been known to imprison large numbers of other regiments and act as task-masters to them in making dug-outs and roads. Troops get into the habit of instinctively taking cover from all Engineers.

Recent Discoveries in the Rhine Valley

From the "Leadswinger," October 20, 3915.

As most of our readers are aware Prof. Dug-Out has been busy for some time past on the work of excavation in the basin of this ancient river, and we have just received from the publishers a small brochure on the results of the work up to the present, from which we are privileged to make a few extracts.

Many interesting finds have been made, some of which throw grave doubts on the theories hitherto held regarding the habits of the early inhabitants of this part of the Continent of Urop. The vast army of workers, under the personal supervision of a trained staff of scientific experts, have unearthed ruins of what at one time must have been a village or town of some size, but the evidence is curiously conflicting, and will require much careful sifting before any definite conclusion can be drawn. A few hypotheses, however, have been suggested by Prof. Dug-out, one of which is based on the finding of certain inscriptions. Several broken fragments of metal, it appears, have been discovered bearing letters which may well be assumed to indicate the name of the town. Prof. Dug-out thinks that possibly the letters represent a word YPPTS or YPRES, the latter being the more likely reading. Large fragments of timber have also been found bearing other characters and letters, apparently burned into the wood. Most of these are quite unintelligible, such combinations of letters appearing as R.A.M.C., R.G.A., D.A.D.M.S. One fragment bears two inscriptions, and its appearance suggests that its use may have been to direct traffic to the town. We reproduce a facsimile of this fragment. The upper of the two words is very similar to the one appearing on the metal fragment, and is almost certainly the name of the town in an alternative spelling, and it is not improbable that the word WIPERS refers to the same place, and may be a dialectic variation of the name. This evidence points to the fact that the town was inhabited by a mixed people speaking different languages, or, at any rate, variant dialects of a possibly common stock.

There are very few suggestions of the

presence of those conical structures built of hardened clay blocks, which we are wont to associate with the domiciliary habits of our ancestors, instead there have been found long rows of cave-like dwellings situated along the banks of a depression which may have been at one time the bed of a river, and assuming such to have been the case, it might be supposed that the inhabitants of these cave dwellings were a race of fishermen, naturally living close to the water.

Both lines of dwellings face the setting sun, and as Prof. Dug-out acutely remarks, the reason for this is probably to be sought for in some ancient religious rite. Besides these cave dwellings, other strange objects have been discovered apparently buried in square pits usually about four metres, cubic capacity. It is difficult to describe the heterogeneous contents of these pits, but the commonest are small cubical or truncated blocks of some thin metallic substance surrounding a softish material, which, when examined, appears to be of animal origin. The outer covering or carapace is occasionally suggestive of colour, and in some cases is ribbed at one end. Various suggestions have been made as to the origin of these collections, but the most likely is that put forward by Mons. Bulibeef, who thinks that these cube-like masses of soft matter with a thin hard outer covering, may be the remains of some early crustacean creature.

A regrettable incident occurred during the excavation of a patch of ground a little to the east of the main works, involving the death of six men, who, whilst digging, were suddenly hurled into space by a violent explosion, the nature of which is at present quite inexplicable. In an article in this Journal last year we drew attention to the frequency of explosions which occurred two thousand years ago, when records show that it was not uncommon for agricultural labourers in Urop to be killed whilst ploughing or digging, and the cause was supposed to be due to the sudden impact of the plough or spade with a peculiar form of stone or shale (occasionally spelled "shell"), which was found in great profusion at this time in this locality. From their appearance and situation, these "shales" or "shells" were supposed to be of meteoric origin, and it is not improbable that the explosion at Ypres, or Wipers, may have been of this nature.

* * * * *

A side that took much of an I.O.'s time was concerned with scares. Somebody would get the maddest idea, and you would have to go out and inquire into things. Thus, in October, 1915, the notion became implanted in certain august craniums that our good Flems were signalling to the foe opposite by means of (*a*) windmills, (*b*) laying out laundry in certain patterns, (*c*) ploughing fields in "tiger" stripes, (*d*) smoke-puffs up the chimney. For a time all windmills and ploughing were stopped. As for the laundry scare—I caught the worst chill, ever, watching o' nights lest the women of a hamlet behind Ypres should come out and signal with shirts or chemises. (They didn't.)

The light side. Why tell of the other? How much more "intriguing" (ugh!) to hear tell of the bearded Viking I.O.—yes, a Swede—who used to have charge of counter-espionage in our area, and who, on account of his accent and appearance, was always getting arrested himself—till someone from Corps bailed him out? He now sells champagne, and I met him recently by the Madeleine, hearty laughter resulting.

Those were the early days, when the dying embers of adventure still smouldered, before awful drabness descended—as it will descend, and from the first, on any "next war." No more cheery nights at Hazebrouck or Lillers—never again. Ah, those nights, wonderful nights of Fifteen, in rain-soaked, one horse towns behind the lines, places I have visited since, only to marvel how we ever drank and sang and loved in them, as we did! Yet they far outstripped, in sheer abandon, anything that Paris has given since. Demonstrating that only human beings peculiarly elated can do the trick; not all the millions of dollars being piled on freak riot in America to-day could, I'll wager, develop one-tenth the thrilling-to-life of the B.E.F. in a town behind the lines, thirteen or fourteen years ago, in France.

Shooting off on my Douglas to Hazebrouck of an evening, there I would rendezvous with kindred spirits and not return to La Lôvie until the icy, misty morn. Usually with a fearful head from war fizz and smoky sing-songs and medemoiselles. The thing was to know the places that the Military Police didn't.

Some day, when I can write short stories, I must tell the story of "Au Bon Air," even should it be akin to literary sacrilege to tread such purely de Maupassant ground. "Au Bon Air" was the last tolerated house in the British Area, and was situated at the top of a hill on the Doullens-Beauval stretch of route nationale. It led to a famous controversy. Certain exalted officers considered this ticklish matter primarily as one of military efficiency, and when asked by General French for their opinion, replied, I believe, that if the houses were closed, it would be tantamount to a loss of 10 per cent in personnel through illness. Great pressure had been put on the Commander-in-Chief to close the houses following a visit of one or two powerfully supported clerics to St. Omer. Ultimately these wise and good men had their way, and with the predicted disastrous consequences. Disease increased in the B.E.F., and worse, it was freely suppressed on account of the triple punishment laid down at the commencement of the War. Although not always or generally put into practice, this stipulated that any officer or man becoming this kind of casualty should (*a*) not be sent back to his old unit (*i.e.* be separated from his comrades), (*b*) lose leave for a year—as good as never seeing home again for the majority of infantrymen at that time—and that (*c*) next-of-kin should be informed of the nature of the casualty. In 1916, this last was too much for a batch of Canadians in hospital at Havre, and they wrecked the place, the military police having to be called in, and there being dead and wounded. Ever after that, at least, (*c*) was discontinued. I wonder, though, how many thousands of ex-Servicemen there must be today who are suffering from the after-effects of suppression? How they must bless those interfering ones!

Another aspect, which interested the French more, was that the closing of the houses spread amateur prostitution far and wide in the area occupied by the B.E.F.

Said the Commandant de la Place at Amiens once to me, on this head:—

"When you took over Amiens from us, I gave your A.P.M. the names of 400 visited women. He tore the list up. Now there are four thousand whores in the town—and most of them diseased. Strange—your English respectability!"

To conclude with this edge of the "Crater," I benefited in the Salient by coming into closer contact there with Major, now Major-General, Sir W. E. Ironside—the same who acted so drastically towards me in 1914 at St. Nazaire. For a short while I was attached to him at Vlamertinghe, where he was G.S.O.2 of the Sixth Division, and there I formed the conclusion that his proper place was at the head of our Intelligence at G.H.Q. Nor has anything supervened in the years since to modify this opinion. A massive giant from Stornoway, R.F.A., and with, I believe, a round dozen languages, Major Ironside literally lived in the German mind and upon ideas, the latter chiefly revolving around possible methods of ending the stalemate with the brain, as distinct from monstrous, bankrupt "attrition." Night after night before the fire at Vlamertinghe Ironside would expound vital deeply penetrating views—that is, when his bulldog would permit him to. His views were not appreciated. I don't quite know the circumstances, but 1916 found him training Canadians at Shorncliffe. The Canadians, of course, jumped at him, and soon he had a brigade on Vimy. Then Winston, ever-criticised Winston, spotted a likely man; and Archangel and the Kemalists, and Persia, followed. Ironside may have achieved a record in the War—that of having risen from captain to substantive major-general—but he was not used as he might have been used. Apparently he "spoke too freely." I wonder he didn't sometimes bellow!

An eloquent commentary is that within three years of the Armistice this neglected giant of the War was appointed chief of the Army's brain box, the Staff College. Perhaps if ever a call should come again, Tiny Ironside's mascot may function better, bringing him right to the top. This consists of a medal he used to wear round his neck, engraved with the name of the 15th German Corps Commander, General von Deimling, opposite us at Ypres. The wearer won it on odd duty in German South-West in 1904 (possibly the token is incomplete without the supporting signature on the reverse of our then chief of espionage).

The last time I saw Ironside, he had just conducted his third successful retreat (from Persia).

" I'm becoming quite well known as a successful retreater," he laughed. " They're thinking of sending me now to take on Mesopotamia."

G.H.Q.

AUGUST, 1916, found me transferred on special duty to Advanced G.H.Q. at Beauquesne, following six months in the Authuille and Arras sectors. We had been the first of three British Corps to go in on the Somme—in January, 1916, consequent upon a somewhat panicky pre-Verdun call from Joffre to his new chief-in-arms, Sir Douglas Haig—though what the latter was expected to do at that time before Thiépval, with precious few guns and Salient-sodden troops, was not quite clear. Fortunately, however, upon this occasion Fortune smiled upon us; Joffre relieving matters on his own.

Beauquesne I found deep in the ninth week of the Somme. Only 1st Echelon was there—about sixty officers, mainly of Operations and Intelligence, with an élite of "A," "Q" and Signals. The guns ever reverberating, life locally was distinctly subdued, "morne et triste," as de Maupassant has it. Personally, I worked in a Nissen hut from 8 a.m. to midnight with two brief messing intervals and an hour's tramp through the slush each afternoon along the Beauval road.

Sir Douglas Haig lived in a château on the

Marieux road, and I have more than once wondered if his long-drawn-out château life may not have made for a certain permanence of mind in his strategy (his successful leadership coincided with his taking to a train in the final months of the War). Is is not possible that had G.H.Q.'s surroundings been less set and established, a subtle effect might have manifested itself upon operations? This, apart from the better example and greater mystifying of the enemy, to say nothing of mobility, that a G.H.Q. in hutments would have produced.

To proceed: I expect most of us can recall moments of high exhilaration in the War years. Perhaps I never thrilled so deeply as when, towards mid-day on September 15th, 1916, a brother officer waltzed into my hut crying:—

"We're walking through Flers behind the Tanks!"

I am positive I rose and cheered—probably yelled. For a very few days only, had we known of the weird monsters assembling around Méaulte; now it seemed that the trick had been done, that the way to Cambrai and to magical names beyond had been opened. Alas! we knew nothing of the forty-nine imperfect machines that had been prematurely put in, still less about the attitude of our High Command to their use at all. In effect, that evening all

G.H.Q. was to know that the Tanks, as prophesied, had been an idiotic failure, "and now let's hope they'll leave us alone with their dam silly inventions."

This, I feel it must be said, was Sir Douglas Haig's view, and that of most of the Staff then about him.

We have yet to read the late Earl Haig's personal papers, which may or may not modify matters, but as things look at present, it may well be that final military judgment will be inclined chiefly to bracket the late Field-Marshal's name with the use, or rather misuse, of the Tanks. I am not one of those who believes that a better leader, for France, could have been lightly found. Our campaign there, from July 1st, 1916, to October 30th, 1917, was the darkest in our military history, yet who is there who can say, for certain, that the enemy would have crumpled, as, and when he did, in 1918, had not Sir Douglas Haig kept on slogging away from the Somme to Passchendaele? Our C.-in-C. would have been the last to have claimed originality of mind for himself, or imagination. But tenacity of purpose he did have, and a deep conviction that all this slogging was inevitable. What he lacked was the instinct of surprise and receptivity to ideas—and this is why, other things being equal, it *might* have been better had Sir E. E. Allenby been called to the command after the Arras fizzling-out of 1917. Allenby was himself involved in that mess, but tactically only, with his cavalry (it is, I believe, a fact that Mr. Lloyd George desired to give him the command, realising that Allenby had ideas, and that he welcomed these in others). Sir Douglas had qualities of note. In addition to utter imperturbability in crises, he was a diplomat to his finger-tips—a circumstance of infinite value in dealing with such tricky Allies as the French. However, over all, looms the misuse of the Tanks, for, all said and done, into our C.-in-C.'s hands was given (if properly utilised) "the greatest surprise weapon ever bestowed upon a military commander in time of war." (I quote the highest living authority in the matter from a recent letter to me.)

Nor is it a case of being wise after the event. As we now know, Colonel Swinton, the man who had the first practical idea of the Tanks, wrote a memorandum in January, 1916, when but one lone Tank existed in this world of woe, specifically warning the General Staff against doing precisely what it did on the Somme. More than this, Colonel (now Major-General Sir E. D.) Swinton then laid down the proper method of employment, which was not to be heeded till nearly two years later at Cambrai; this weapon being thus lost to us for twenty-two vital months.

Verily, when we consider it, the tale of G.H.Q. and the Tanks is a sorry one. When the Tanks were again put in, against the exhortations of all Tank officers, into the hopeless mud-sea of Passchendaele (when they, of course, stuck fast), G.H.Q. again wrote home wanting once more to scrap the lot; "About as sensible," as my correspondent writes, "as doing away with navies because battleships can't climb mountains." On August 4th, by which time the whole battle had "stuck fast," Colonel Fuller begged that he might be allowed to do the famous Cambrai coup right away with Byng. Haig's Chief of Staff, Kiggell, demurred; and so it was not until November, much too late, when all Haig's potential reserves to exploit a Southern break-through lay dead or wounded in the Salient, that the vindication of the Tank in the South became feasible.

I have sometimes wondered if the Tanks would have been so much ignored, scoffed at, had Sir John French retained his command. Wondered even, upon occasion, why Sir John was succeeded by Sir Douglas Haig, his erstwhile Chief of Staff in South Africa. Repington quotes Churchill as having said, in 1916, that French had "the sacred fire of leadership" in which he was "unsurpassed." The same authority makes Foch say, a week after the latter had begun attacking with Haig on the Somme, "French was a great leader—why was he changed?" In London there seems to have been a general consensus of opinion (emphatically shared by "F.E.") that the best would have been French, with Haig as Chief of Staff—Lord Haldane even wanting Haig to go home as C.I.G.S. Rightly or wrongly, I have always felt that there was a suspicious expedition about French's removal; that he was not given a fair chance to show his mettle, and that he fell as much a victim to "the personal war" as to any impartial judgment on his ability as a commander. Consider, in this regard, how strewn was his path with past Curragh and private trouble, with animosities freely provoked, it is true, by his own Irish temperament.

French started the War (scenting trouble) by going to "K." and offering to serve under him in the field. The Government thinking otherwise, French was sent overseas with the strictest written injunctions to preserve at all costs the Expeditionary Force, particularly from its being used up by our Allies. Sir John has been criticised for being too far back during the Retreat—as Haig has been taken to task for exposing Smith-Dorrien's right flank—but the fact endures that French did what he was told and extracted his force with an easily adjustable loss of, I think, 14,000. But on September 1st, in Paris, he had as good as told "K." that his proper place was in Whitehall; and the fat was in the fire, never to be extricated.

When French asked for certain officers—usually good choices, like Plumer and Wilson—somehow he was always given others, sometimes men with whom he had quarrelled in the past, such as Smith-Dorrien. From start to finish Sir John, himself something of a bantam-cock temperamentally, appears to have been pestered, even baited. A born leader, full of pluck and determination, and popular with the men, he was constantly being worried by trifles, spied upon in his private life at St. Omer. Worse, he was being morally undermined by "K." forever telephoning direct, over the C.-in-C.'s head, to senior officers in the field, notably direct to Haig when the latter was conducting the Loos operations with Rawlinson.

How could one expect French to carry on properly in such circumstances? At one time, and I speak from personal knowledge, this business of "K." telephoning under the Channel attained such proportions that Intelligence was called in to occupy itself with a transient "Channel cable scare," the fear being that a

German submarine had applied a listening set to the cable and was overhearing everything being said on the line! French gave Haig absolute credit for the latter's magnificent defence of Ypres in 1914.

It is difficult to see how blame to the point of stellenbosch can be fastened on to Sir John for his four remaining battles. The first Battle of Ypres was a successful operation. And if French was sometimes ungetatable during its evolution and nervy in his changes from optimism to pessimism, his M.O., Colonel Ryan, later told me he was a sick man at the time. If Aubers-Festubert were bad shows, we were learning every minute then and we had no shells. In the same way the preceding battle of Neuve Chapelle was also an experimental unfolder of verities. Loos—largely lost by amateur Staff work in the field—cost, all told, 13,000 less casualties than the first day alone of Haig's début offensive on the Somme nine months later. And anyway, in all these 1915 battles Haig was French's executive officer.

Of course, French did foolish things—such as holding back the Loos reserves—and was hard to get on with. Also the War may have been "over his head," but hardly more so, I contend on the showing, than over most of the others' heads. The point here is to suggest that if and when a Government undertakes the slippery business of relieving a C.-in-C. of his command, that Government should be quite certain that it has a better man to fill the gap. French seems to have lost his job through weakening, as a result of one long-drawn-out intrigue against him and because he was decent enough to lend an ear to Mr. Asquith's mysterious approaches —made without the Cabinet's knowledge— suggesting that the C.-in-C. come home and help him (Asquith) to stand up against Kitchener. French may have been a nuisance to the politicians, but was he a nuisance in a good or a bad cause? Was his act in getting Repington to call for high explosive shells a reprehensible one viewed from to-day? I know the whole wretched story, on the personal side—it was told me by one of Sir John's staff, years later. How French was suspected of receiving money from the American, Moore (whom he had impulsively and foolishly set up in a munitions factory near St. Omer!). How he was also suspect of holding festivity at St. Omer.

This, I think, was the meanest side—probably put about by political opponents like the libel in the *World*. What if he did play cards? What if he did welcome a pretty face in France? What if he did take a peg of whisky? Was Wellesley so impervious to beauty at Cadiz?

Or Grant so confoundedly "dry" at Appomattox?

Well, having lain discreetly low while his chief was fighting "K." as well as the Germans, "lucky" Haig, balanced and cool, methodical and diplomatic, got the job; with what result, until after August 8, 1918, we know.

Sir Douglas's top-heaviness as a defensive commander may, incidentally, suggest that in future wars, if any, Defensive and Offensive Commanders-in-Chief might be appointed; that as operations have apparently grown beyond the power and reach of one military brain, complementary commanders should be nominated: one to take over when operations are "up his street," say, defensive in nature, the other to get into the saddle directly the tide turns into attacking. For if, as a defensive commander, Haig had no peer in 1914-18, as an offensive leader it was another story—and unfortunately we were supposed to be on the offensive for nearly the whole of Haig's tenure of the Command.

A Commander-in-Chief's brain should be made up of two halves: Operations and Intelligence. Foch tells us that he always turned to the latter first: found out just what the enemy was up to. From December, 1915, to November, 1917, the two halves of Haig's brain in France were Major-General Kiggell and Brig.-General Charteris, these officers having replaced Robertson and Macdonogh when French went. My belief is that Haig's debatable showing was sharply connected with an undue dependence on Kiggell and Charteris, both of whom were changed after Passchendaele.

Being my chief, I knew General Charteris fairly well. He was a big, dynamic, bustling man, with hair in disorder and rarely a moment to spare (he is in Parliament now). Gifted with immense push and by no means averse to ideas, a glutton for work, and loving to give off sparks, Charteris had been on Haig's personal staff in Aldershot days, which was, however, scarcely sufficient reason why he should have been Haig's Chief of Intelligence in a European War. Frankly, I do not think he was built for that. He had not the necessary analytical patience. That very enthusiasm which enabled him to "see big" and develop "I" branch beyond imagining, emerged as his principal weakness when it came to the heart and soul of intelligence work: slowly piling up brick upon brick, as in pyramid-building, until the topmost stone fell in position—showing what the enemy was going to do. Sometimes the head of "I" seemed to invert this method of deduction, seemed in his enthusiasm to place the topmost brick in position first—a preconceived idea about a situation—and then see that all the remaining bricks (" intelligence " crowding in from a dozen different sources) conducted up to it. He was also too much of an optimist—a victim of his own sanguine exuberance—while he liked to deal too starkly in blacks and whites with not enough toning in between. Perhaps I can give my quondam chief in a nutshell by relating the following:—

While he was head of the branch, the weekly map showing the German formations confronting the British used to be marked in big red capitals:—

ENEMY'S ORDER OF BATTLE

When his successor, Brig.-General Cox, took over, this inscription was immediately modified to:—

ENEMY'S SUPPOSED ORDER OF BATTLE

General Chateris was, of course, not responsible for the tragic fact of Sir Douglas Haig striking, as he invariably did strike, against the strongest grouping of the German Army then massed in any sector on the Western Front. The job of " I " was to present that picture of German readiness, of the enemy waiting with his mouth open for us, and then to withdraw. Yet I cannot help thinking that had my chief paid less attention to his notorious graph of enemy manpower, which seemed to obsess him (possibly from contact with higher officers) and been more accessible to the many brilliant " civilian " Intelligence brains in the B.E.F., the results might have been happier. As far back as 1916 he would have learnt of a practical alternative to the obstinate, almost insensate frontal butting against the German line that was to endure until the end of the following year. In September, 1916, he might have listened to one of his own officers unfold a scheme by which, prior to our next attack, we should fake all kind of road and other activity, deliberately, so that the enemy should see it several miles *south* of where we intended going over. This form of hoodwinking of the enemy into making false deductions regarding our battle intentions, Foch, in 1918, was about to put into practice with a special " travelling circus " of several arms whose raison d'être was to journey hither and thither on command and put up the dust so as to mislead the German air scouts and other observers.

It was the Enemy Man Power Graph, decorating General Charteris' wall at Montreuil and purporting to show the steady and relentless decline of (chiefly) German reserves, which led as much as anything else to a reshuffle in "I" branch. Like much else, this graph erred on the side of optimism. The French would have none of it, though that was small test. Still, they used to tell distinguished British visitors to the Grand Q.G. that there was a "machin" up at British Headquarters by which the day the War would end could be told . . . when the enemy would have no more men! Our friends used to laugh. Once Lord Northcliffe—as he later told me—listened to this mirth and wasn't at all so elated. Indeed, he went straight to Whitehall upon his return to England and drew attention to the matter. The time was darkest midnight at Passchendaele. Gradually the notion took shape in London that this graph constituted the root of all the dreadful war of attrition that was going on and by which we were losing much more than the enemy. Battles were being fought principally to cause a drop in the curve of that graph—showing a further decrease in enemy manpower. It was decided that it wasn't good enough (even given that the graph was accurate which the wretched thing never was). In the outcome, lack of manpower didn't lose Ludendorff the War. By pillboxing and contracting, by rendering units and formations ever more mobile and better machine-gunned, by all the tricks of the trade of which he was such a master, Ludendorff could have carried on long after he did, but for other considerations.

Of the other side of Sir Douglas Haig's brain in the dark years, Major-General Kiggell, I naturally knew and heard less. No one seemed to know just why he had been given the major say in executing Britain's battles in her greatest war (on his recall he was given command in the Channel Isles). He detested the Tanks, which may give his flexibility of mind; and he was a Passchendaele man to the hilt, arguing and prevailing against the breaking-off of that battle.

As envoi to G.H.Q. I would say that I am no more convinced now than I was in 1916 that the change from French, Robertson and Macdonogh, to Haig, Kiggell and Charteris was a sound or a justified one. Robertson and Macdonogh went home to take on higher jobs; there should have been no "higher" jobs than France. French was prematurely mined out of his command by such things as this: after Loos Haig felt compelled to send back a written report of the battle direct to "K." over the head of his chief (from Brig.-General Charteris' Life of Haig).

SPECIAL DUTY

I REFERRED to "special duty" at G.H.Q.

Once upon a time, in the late summer of 1915, there was a wireless set with a battery near the ramparts of Ypres, whose operator used regularly to intercept, twice or thrice a week around 5 p.m., the hostile call sign HE—a high-pitched, quivering note certainly emanating from one of the very few German aeroplanes then registering heavy artillery on the British Front. Usually, about the same time, one of several ticklish points in Ypres—such as the congested Menin Gate—would be shelled by a very heavy gun popularly known as Bertha. In due course it became a local obsession that HE corresponded to Bertha being ranged by wireless. Sent to investigate, I arranged that the next time HE was picked up, counter-battery fire should be opened at once on the known approximate position of Bertha in Houthoulst Forest. This was done, and, unable to tend their gun under our specially ordered fire, the enemy failed to respond to HE's calling on them to register.

Obvious reflection: Supposing we managed to make similar "shelling connections" all the way down the British front—came to connect given German wireless call signs with known located hostile batteries—why, directly we intercepted such and such a call sign, we could immediately switch on to the enemy battery corresponding to it, and about to be registered, and crump its personnel back into the bowels of the earth! All the rest of them engaged in locating and negativing hostile batteries—the Sound Rangers, the R.F.C., the balloons, visual observers—would be the merest pendants to us! Presently, their big guns unregistered, the Germans would be as blind as bats for all practical purposes, in the gargantuan artillery war looming ahead!

Many dreams were dreamt at Ypres. Such was one. Yet such, also, was the genesis of a system which achieved surprising results before the War was ended, and of which—thanks to vital technical advances in the interim—the opposing armies in any future conflict are certain to make the widest use.

In the winter that followed upon HE's appearance, I did my ordinary Corps Intelligence work by day and sat up half the night (small boasting, others were standing up all night in mud) bent over fragmentary wireless hieroglyphics as these were sportingly intercepted haphazard from German aeroplanes by one or two of our rare formations in the field then possessing facilities. At Corps, this incoherent mass and unpopular accretion to the paper war came to be known as " Tuohy's Tripe "—by all save the B.G.G.S., Lord Loch. To him it was already grandiloquently " Aeroplane Wireless Intelligence," though, truth to tell, if vocalised, some of the intercept sheets of those days would have sounded not unlike the rending of canvas linked to the suffocation of sea-lions, and have been about as intelligible.

Nevertheless, one thing had to be done. There was no step forward possible until we at least knew what the enemy was talking about in the air. So it came to pass that, by methods which need not here be gone into fully (lest my story should be too technical or indiscreet), by dint of this and that, by trying every conceivable juggling of lettering based on German colloquialisms, by scrutinising captured documents and drinking wine with shot-down German air officers, by comparing things with our own code and by much guesswork and deduction, I was eventually able to forward the German code, decoded, to G.H.Q. at the commencement of February, 1916. But there remained a parallel numerical code which I could not fathom, yet which was urgent enough, since it referred to fleeting targets spotted by the enemy in our lines—invariably important ones, such as troops on the march—and wirelessed down by hostile observers for immediate shelling. If we could get that numerical code, we could warn and clear threatened areas, and thus save both men and material.

Fortunately luck—and the R.F.C.—were on my side. One evening the glorious news came through that a hostile wireless machine had been forced down in our lines—pilot, observer, code-map and all! The enemy continued to use that code-map, with slight variations, which we were easily able to follow, for two years, and as an example of its service to us, I may be permitted to quote the following excerpt from a memorandum drawn up when things were moving to a climax in 1918:—

" In the six months ending April, 1918, the enemy signalled 577 co-ordinate targets, which were decipherable in time for action to be taken. In sixty-two cases the enemy's signals were not decipherable. Hostile shelling usually followed after ten minutes or so, and warnings have, as a whole, been put through in time for areas involved to be cleared, much loss in casualties and material thus being averted."

. . . But, reverting to early Sixteen, G.H.Q. got everything we had, yet we got little in return. The blood test of the Somme was then in preparation, and there was no one to say: " This wireless stunt is giving results. Let's organise an experimental system, as they are shouting for, and give it a trial behind the Somme offensive." For hard on six irreplaceable months "Aeroplane Wireless Intelligence" looked like being stillborn, until, in fact, an R.E. subaltern in August, 1916, came nobly to the rescue with the first "aeroplane directional compass," a laughable, creaking aerial, which it took two men to swing round, but by means of which it became possible to locate enemy 'planes using wireless for registration (on the same principle as the Zeppelins were tracked and charted).

The value of this was at once apparent. The R.F.C. must be given the location of all hostile wireless machines registering batteries on the battle front so that they could go up at once in pursuit; in this manner the German heavy artillery would be "blinded" just as efficaciously in the long run. Thanks to the spirited intervention of the O.C. Wireless, I was able to place the scheme before Major-General Trenchard who was as enthusiastic as others had been deadening. I went to Advanced G.H.Q.—where the freak compass was—and for the balance of the battle of the Somme concentrated exclusively upon advising the R.F.C. directly a registering machine began wirelessing, and where it was located, and upon supplying General Trenchard with a chart each evening of enemy aeroplane wireless activity that day. This was the first picture of the enemy in the air that the Flying Corps had ever had, and soon we were packing off stop-press charts every few hours by despatch-rider to Fienvillers.

Two memories of those pioneer days return—General Trenchard's telephonic booming one luncheon-hour on seeing on a chart that a German observer had actually been wirelessing from *our* side of the line for two whole hours that morning; and Sergeant Riches, R.E., in the interception hut, " tuning-in to old Sauerkraut." Riches, a curly, fair-haired babe, gradually came to recognise the sending of individual German observers, and had given them all nicknames. I have never known anything like the keenness of wireless men, and nothing whatever could have been done without them. For instance, the technical side was almost wholly responsible for this result:—

" In the last eight weeks, acting on 60 per cent of the warnings passed to them and sending up 297 special patrols, the R.A.F. (*a*) destroyed a hostile machine every tenth flight, (*b*) drove one down or out of control every sixth or seventh flight, (*c*) drove one East (*i.e.*, home) every flight."

And nearly all of these were artillery machines using wireless, extra dangerous aeroplanes specially picked out by our compasses for attack. Similarly, four months of intensive application at Beauquêsne to a daily mountain of accurate intercept sheets had served to place the whole German system on the table, and the upshot was that I was ordered to organise this new form of Intelligence forthwith in each Army. Intercept masts, compasses, and personnel—including ten officers—were rained upon me. Also I was to go and lecture all five Army Staffs. In vain I pleaded that the less said, etc. Not on your life! A certain person-with-a-say believed in publicity—if Intelligence had succeeded in "putting something over," then let the fact resound in every privileged ear (and in a good many unprivileged ones also).

Those lectures! Trying to render intelligible, to sheds and rooms full of yawning brigadiers and staff officers, a highly specialised and intricate new conversion of science to the common end! I wasn't born to be a lecturer, anyway . . . how hot and bothered I used to get on those occasions . . . a tempy 2nd Lieutenant holding forth, or rather trying to, to Army Commanders and their gold-laced satellites! Once I was summoned into the school at Beauquesne to explain things to Sir Douglas Haig. But that wasn't so unnerving. Always a silent soldier, Sir Douglas did not depart from type or rule during my swift five minutes' exposé, merely grunting once or twice and then suddenly saying, at the first pause, "Very interesting. Thanks." I never knew whether he understood how much was extractable from the scheme.

My only other meeting with the C.-in-C. was rather less fortunate.

At Beauquesne, through no fault of my own, I was billeted in the back room of an estaminet whose three serving wenches, daughters of the house, had no better reputations than they should have had. Coming out of my temporary home early one morning, I walked almost into the C.-in-C.'s Rolls, and in my confusion raised my hand to the salute without remembering that I was bare-headed.

Up pulled the Rolls and out hopped an A.D.C., beckoning to me.

"The Commander-in-Chief wants to know, firstly, what you are doing in that place, and secondly, why you give this special brand of salute."

"I live there, sir. And I forgot."

"Wait a minute."

For an awful moment I thought of disgrace, even of being put into the Infantry. And all for a cap. The conference in the Rolls seemed to drag out interminably (actually the whole incident covered less than than it takes to relate). At last the A.D.C. hopped out again.

"The Commander-in-Chief will see your General about you this evening. He thinks you had better go down to the base for a course of training."

That was all I was to hear of the matter . . .

Reverting to the lecturing, the most unsettling experience was when I arrived nearly an hour late at General Plumer's H.Q. on Cassel Hill. The vast Intelligence room was packed with sarcastic, impatient officers, many of whom had motored in from Ypres. I came in longing for the floor to open and swallow me up. The least would be a terrific public strafe. And how could one lecture on "Wireless Intelligence" after that? As luck would have it, however, nervousness put the mot juste into my mouth right at the outset of my attempted explanation.

"It was a woman's fault," I began—and got no further.

Immediately a howl of laughter went up from those brooding brigadiers. They thought they were going to get a really good "civilian sob" excuse.

"A woman?" queried the local head of "I" branch, a hustling, efficient, goods-in-the-window Canadian Colonel and mill-manager. "What on earth do you mean?"

"Yes," I replied, picking up courage. "That Belgian girl who works the swing-bridge at Arcq. She refused to open it for three-quarters of an hour . . . let string after string of barges through. Said some General had been rude to her shortly before, because he couldn't get over quickly enough."

The lecture continued.

. . . Before setting off to look into things on the other Fronts I had the satisfaction of seeing a network of fourteen "Wireless Intelligence" posts established and functioning behind our lines, and results accumulating daily. By the Battle of Arras, besides issuing warnings to units, etc., of approaching shelling, and sending pilots off after almost every German artillery machine that took the air, we were beginning to direct the attention of Archie on to wireless machines (usually six thousand feet up, and flying backwards and forth in a short lane two miles on *their* side of the line), and even at last—wonder of wonders—getting the Gunners interested, that the all-important counter-battery side of the system should develop.

During the battle (of Arras) General Trenchard sent a memorandum to all five Brigades of the Flying Corps requesting right of way for me as the system had "helped very largely in the present battle." I have an autographed copy before me; it is dated May 12th, 1917, and it shall remain my trophy.

Years after, in August, 1922, when I was interviewing Ludendorff on " Monarchy " in his villa at Wilhelmshöhe, outside Munich, he chanced to question me regarding my war serservice. On my answering, and mentioning this system, he barked back immediately, " Ya, ya! I know. We got every bit as much as you did!" However, in the grand climax, our system, built for stationary conditions, ceased fully to function " faute de communications," but we were sorting things out nicely again, and even launching out on a new branch, that of seeking to mislead the enemy's Intelligence by doing dummy wireless work and engaging upon other hush-hush tricks, when the end came. For the 1919 campaign against the Antwerp-Meuse line, which we all thought certain, " Aeroplane Wireless Intelligence " was to have been a mobile self-dependent concern mounted on lorries, but even so it would have fallen far short of what it should be in any future war.

The wireless telephone, both between aircraft and from post to post on the ground, the semi-secret beam system, new compasses, new transmission and interception, all the very things we lacked and prayed for most, the things which would have enabled us really to " blind the guns," instead of merely befogging them, as we succeeded in doing in some measure, have since appeared. For although from good old HE of

Ypres sprang things I, at least, never dreamt of, the dominant conception of every hostile heavy and medium battery and minenwerfer being silenced a few minutes after it attempted to register, was not even remotely fulfilled.

In his last thrusts Ludendorff was employing as many as 400 wireless machines on a given battle-front. How many thousand such will be necessary in any mechanised, keeping-contact conflict of the future, heaven alone knows. But one thing is certain: whether the front be deadlocked or should open warfare prevail, a dead set will be made from the word "go" against every blessed hostile machine using wireless in the air, no matter for what purpose. To place a hand over the mouth, so to speak, of every enemy airman capable of becoming articulate from the clouds will be the paramount duty of "Aeroplane Wireless Intelligence," and in the fulfilling of it the guns—at any rate the heavy guns imperatively requiring aerial registration—should automatically be more or less "blinded" for all their subsequent rather random shelling-for-effect would count.

P.S.—Lest people should think that the above chapter is "giving something away" that had better have been kept quiet in the present state of the world, I have applied my usual test to it. It contains nothing that did not become fully known at the time to the General Staffs of our late Enemies, Allies, and Associates alike. I had myself to initiate the U.S. Brig.-General Mitchell.

YPRES—EGYPT.

Outside the restaurant in dark Boulogne an unknown officer was asleep in the back of the car. He was so sorry! But would we give him a lift? He'd done the round of the drivers and had hopped in as soon as he'd hit a car bound for Amiens. (That "lift" habit—so deeply ingrained in the war years that one hazarded at the time that it never could be erased! Yet try stopping a stockbroker on the Ripley road to-day and asking for one.)

At Amiens, at midnight, mine host of the Rhin was very sorry, but the hotel was full up with English deputies who had arrived unexpectedly. Information which caused a dark look to spread o'er the countenance of my Regular companion.

"The BLIGHTERS!" he gasped. "The joy-riding blighters! Who asked them here? . . . to be kept out all night, in your own country, too, by a lot of blankety politicians . . . go and give themselves four hundred a year . . . no use for 'em . . . well, then . . . why should they be sleeping up there and we down here in the street. *Eh?*"

It all seemed so dreadfully conclusive at the time.

At the France no better luck. Here and everywhere we went, attracted by a light, directly we rang the bell, out would go the light —a phenomenon which proceeded to repeat itself mournfully for the next hour or so until we at last decamouflaged the military police in a side-street, when they were heartlessly brief about it:—

" Beggin' yer pardon, sir, but we goes round ringing them there bells when they're showin' too much light. Thought I'd tell you gentlemen."

" Va dormir! Les enfants! On dirait des Boches! " advised natives; on the recommedation of one of whom, we eventually finished the night in the hospital.

Amiens at this stage (autumn, 1917) gave one the impression of a jaded, overstrained, community. Gone the Senegalese, Australians, Poilus, Guardsmen, Canadians, Turcos, Scotties, Annamites of the Somme—that condensed riot of male fitness whose descent upon the place will be long in effacing itself.

Immediately on arrival in Paris one had to report. This used to be called by some " reporting to Zena " on account of the life-size portrait of his wife with which Colonel the Hon. Maurice Brett used to decorate his wall, above his head in the Marché St. Honoré. And very nicely

Zena used to smile down upon us, moreover. Which reminds me that this reporting wasn't mere functioning. In Paris were spies and adventurers masquerading as British officers; sometimes, also, the authentic breed would get into card, robbery, or blackmail trouble—whereupon a checking up at Colonel Brett's helped vastly.

The British officer in Paris divided his time between "seeing the village," sipping cocktails, imbibing champagne, and furthering romance. As hotels he favoured the Continental, Chatham, and Edouard VII; as restaurants, the Café de Paris, Prunier's, Maxim's, and Ciro's; as music halls, the Folies Bergères, Marigny, and the Vaudeville; and as bankers, the eternal triangle: Cox—Banque de France—Crédit Lyonnais, at each of which he could draw £5 a day, making a maximum potential spending day of 760 francs, from which sum, however, it was impossible to separate oneself in twenty-four hours in those smothered times of 10 p.m. closing and war upon all "boîtes."

The Parisians were quite frank as to which were their favourite Allies and which the reverse. And what a selection. Loud-living, bemedalled Russians, braves Belges, melancholy Serbs, Overseas supermen, determined Doughboys "getting their feet wet," shy Englishmen (mais avec le diable au corps—on appelle ces gens froids?), gay and gesticulating Italians. But the darling of the boulevards, always, to the end, was—"Scottie."

Paris struck one for its emptiness, the absence of all music, and the reserved bearing of the passer-by, as different again from temporary London with its hysterical and exulting young womanhood having the time of its life.

At the Gare de Lyon the advantages of war loomed up. Where one wrangled in peace-time over luggage and tips and seats, now one was met by a business-like N.C.O. who constituted himself porter and pilot combined, registering all kit, reserving a sleeping-berth and checking ticket and warrant with the R.T.O. One merely had to stroll down the platform to one's corner seat in the Rome express without raising as much as a finger or parting with a sou. Indeed, it was the same the whole of my journey, which was to take me, before it ended, right round the remaining half of the "Crater," from Boulogne to Baghdad and back via India, Palestine, Salonika, and the Piave—some 15,000 miles all told—without my once passing outside of a British Lines of Communication; an aspect given to few to have beheld and experienced and which I shall always retain, above all others, of our effort.

There would be a great scramble for the Rome express's eighteen beds. Only an Army Commander could bespeak a compartment to himself; but with commendable discrimination the various Allies would be as far as possible racially sorted out, for however cemented an Entente might be by day, night was apt to bring out certain national oddities.

At Modane, the whole business of trans-training and Customs was again done by the military police working in lordly but perfect harmony with French and Italian colleagues, the strange spectacle resulting of a station where everyone was trying to help everybody else. From Genoa on, I recollect, the night was disturbed owing to a plump American diva making love in song to a responding Italian basso. However, it was not for us to complain. A thoughtful Staff had sandwiched into our ticket some hints as to how to conduct ourselves while passing through Italy, and one of these hints said: "Give way at all times to the Italians." So on they warbled most of the night next door, thoroughly disproving, incidentally, that grand opera amours are mere travesties of life.

Everybody would be held up in Rome from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., a bath, shave, and breakfast opposite the station at the Continental being the stereotyped prelude to the Forum and the rest. Of the fifteen-hour run down to Taranto, in highly-itchy conditions, it would be wise to keep one's kit beside one, however bulky, the wholesale fleecing of equipment in Calabria suggesting that somewhere or other must have existed an entire khaki settlement.

Taranto, British naval and military crossroads for the East, one found a stifling, malarious place of endless glare and dust and evil eyes, staring small boys, flies, and lazzaroni. Four miles away, at Cimino, a British camp had been formed where one rested until posted for Salonika, Port Said, or "Alex." All sorts of officers were there to see that one rested properly and did not overdue things in the excitement line. The attractions offered being manifold: cards, bathing amid garbage of the Italian Fleet, playing the gramophone in one's tent (when this wasn't being washed away or blown down), writing home on one's mattress, or queuing up for the library of eleven volumes, with "Trilby" as the rare prize booked up for weeks. Such a mushroom tent-town was Cimino at this time, producing entire new avenues of canvas in a night, that sometimes one lost one's way in the morning en route to draw one's biscuits, bacon fat, and watery tomatoes.

In the mess the oldest inhabitant, a subaltern of four weeks' resting, would be the centre of newcomers' awed interest and approval.

"I remember," he would declaim, "when I started resting on my kit out there where they're beginning to build the theatre. Why, this is like the Carlton compared with early days!"

Quite the most interesting way of passing the time would be studying the various types of officer. There were over two hundred in camp. Territorial veterans of the Peninsula (never "Gallipoli") enjoying a tacit distinction; Regular gunners from the North-West Frontier; young "huns" of the R.F.C. scarcely past the marbles stage; Indian cavalry bound for fields where spurs still counted a lot; padres galore tripping on one another's heels in quest of the common prize—permission to preach the Sunday sermon; modest young infantrymen, referred to as "pip-squeaks," yet not a few of whom had been five times over the top that year; I.W.T. experts off to irrigate Mesopotamia; shining Yeomen; spick and span staff officers. All swopping yarns from Ypres to Baghdad—what "shop" Cimino used to produce! Daily, twenty-five of us were allowed down to Taranto, which used to thrill the man returning from the desert but bored the "Westerner" to tears; indeed, soon after the mayor forbade kilts in the town as damaging to the morals of his townswomen, we more or less boycotted the place, with its one-and-only sticky, cinzano-and-soda. Besides his thrilling to Taranto, the " Easterner " was also distinguishable from the " Westerner " by the degree of sunburn round his knees, a fearfully important matter that engaged much of our time and thoughts, prestige depending thereon. The practised eye could tell exactly how many summers a man had done in the East by studying the sunburn caused by the wearing of shorts.

One sundown 550 of us zigzagged away in the little *Snaefell* which in happier days carried lovesick and seasick Wake parties to and from the Isle of Man. (I was lucky, the vessel I had been first posted to, the *Aragon*, going down behind us with 250 officers and nursing sisters. This was the terrible occasion when, against orders, the accompanying T.B.D.'s stopped to try and save the women and were also torpedoed. Also, did one ever grasp what the sinking of such a vessel—full in this case of expert officers, R.E., R.A.F., R.A.—meant to a campaign such as Allenby's? It simply put it clean out of joint.

Good for twenty knots, well-armed with 3-inchers and M.G.'s, and an expert in dropping depth-charges and then accelerating full-speed ahead, the *Snaefell* was considered the safest type of transport. "We're too small a target, too quick, too well-armed, and too jolly like a decoy," explained one of the crew. Still, we continued zigzagging and changing speed the whole way to Egypt. And with our camouflage we looked rather like a lane in Surrey.

The day at sea started at 5 a.m. with a cascade of water. Swabbing the deck. For one hour a spotlessly clean deck would be deluged. At 8 a.m. came a first-rate navy ration breakfast. At 10.30, ship's inspection by the Captain and O.C. troops, on which occasion we would form up, wearing life-belts, opposite the boats allotted us. I had a boat of thirty-two but never once was I told what to do in an emergency. On the other hand, sixty-four quinine tablets would be given me daily to distribute, two per man. After which, the life-saving parade was at an end. After lunch all turned in till tea-time: siesta habit contracted with the heat of southern Italy. Throughout the twenty-four hours, military officers of the watch were posted to look out for hostile craft. Every two hours this duty officer would mount the bridge, and, saluting, report "All's well, sir," of which remark the ship's officer, pacing up and down, would take not the slightest notice. Indeed, when one landlubber once hurriedly mounted the bridge and stammered out, "Periscope a hundred yards to port, sir," the ship's officer glanced casually at the object glistening in the moonlight and then withered the alarmist with a "Don't you know a ruddy bottle when you see one?" Ever after which we left the Navy to it.

The orderly officer of the day had multifarious duties on paper but all he actually did was to wear a Sam Browne and see that all the lean didn't go to the sergeants' mess. Towards dusk one repaired to the saloon for a chota peg. The good ship was "dry" but we had seen to that at Taranto by forming a liquor club with a president, a barrister in private life (why *are* barristers always trusted?) who might have been seen each morning surrounded by decimal points trying to get the co-efficient of the previous night's Chianti. At 10 p.m., lights out and portholes opened, the nights being passable but for one individual whose snores were not of this world. The attractive idea of placing a megaphone to the snore woke up the snorer all right, but one couldn't stand by with the megaphone all night long.

Stopping in at Suda Bay, we found the great *Minnewaska* upturned on the rocky shore and the local inhabitants living in transatlantic luxury on the strength of visits to the wreck.

After swimming from the *Snaefell* in jelly-fish (and shark) waters, we watched H.M.S. *Blank* play British Instructors to the Greek Army at football; imbibed an execrable Cretan vintage in the Piccadilly Hotel—a disused stable—and set off up the hard high road for the gay capital, Canea, which we found lying in the dearest little blue-and-white crescent imaginable. Here, lording it on the balcony from which Venizelos had declared his secession from Athens two years before, we permitted ourselves to be serenaded and saluted without end by the keen Greek levies below. Before leaving I managed to secure a bottle of starko vodka that had lain fallow ever since the Allied Fleets had landed detachments in the Greco-Turkish War—this for presentation to a distinguished friend we were carrying on the *Snaefell*, the late Admiral of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, now making himself scarce before Kerensky. That night, in the saloon, the outcast was duly toasted, when he said in an aside to me:—

> This is just a silly little occasion I know, but I feel it more than any banquet. You don't know what it is to be an outcast. The English are really an extraordinary people. Here is my country betraying you and yet you honour me. I hesitate to think what would

> happen to Englishmen in Russia were the position reversed. They say that the English are rude and foreigners polite. The foreigner is polite in all the little things on the surface. The Englishman descends to the things that really matter—to-night for example.

Whereupon someone struck up the Russian National Anthem on the padre's harmonium and we were " off " again. It was well after 3 a.m. when the company finally broke up after endless speeches, songs and stimulant, and as someone said, " It'll be short and sharp if the Hun gets us to-night. Just one big blue flame and exit the *Snaefell*."

In point of fact that night did bring a narrow shave, a 12,000 ton Harrison liner being put down ahead with £1,000,000 of stores. The enemy submarine had sidled up with a sail rigged up to look like an Egyptian dhow, and, coming up to 500 yards, had got a bull or " down in seven minutes."

A rousing cheer of thanks, going right to the heart of Jack, and we said good-bye to the *Snaefell* at Alexandria—I to dash across and catch the *Minnetonka* at Port Said. The largest ship ever to go through the canal, the *Minnetonka* was sunk on her voyage home. Now she carried East 2,000 raw recruits and many hundred horses, concerning the former of whom an excruciatingly comic incident befell soon after I boarded the vessel and as we were gliding slowly past Ismailia. It was evening, and on the bank lounged a typical slouch-hatted, hard-bitten old Aussie who rose languidly as we came by and, cupping his hands, bellowed the time-honoured: "Are we downhearted?"

"*NO!*" roared back 2,000 eager young throats from home.

"Well you bloody well soon will be!" bawled back our Aussie through his hands, prior to resuming his perch and pipe. (Surely the world's record leg-pull?)

As for the horses, I fear that voyage down the Red Sea and to the Persian Gulf worked out as a tragedy. The poor brutes had to stand the whole eighteen days and nights from Marseilles to Basra (their swollen joints made them for a long time useless when they ultimately arrived in Mesoptamia), and they died freely from pneumonia contracted from the air one had to let in down the canvas shafts. Others had to be destroyed through kicks, and over the side each day went the quadruped casualties, to be devoured before our eyes by a school of sharks which seemed to follow us the whole way to the Bar below Basra. Myself spent the ten days perspiring interminably and laid out gaspingly on deck deep in the whole of Thackeray, or else watching the flying fishes play—glorious interlude of the ocean. Others interested in the sparkling hoppings would be the afore-mentioned young " huns " of the Air Force, many of whom we carried. Critically these would watch the amphibious creatures in action, ever and anon venturing such expert opinions as " Not a bad take-off that one," or " That's about her ceiling."

At Basra I had still many hundred miles to go before reaching the end of the British Line.

FIVE HUNDRED MILES OF DAM-ALL

I LANDED in Mesopotamia on the last November 11th that was to pass unnoticed in our time. A week later, and while still waiting to ship upstream from Basra, the news of Sir Stanley Maude's death was posted at the Officers' Club.

"A dam fine soldier—here's to him!" said the Indian Army sahibs around, raising their chota pegs. Everything was saturated with India—a new world of converse, kit, manners and morals resulting, for the just-tolerated Westerner.

A Commander-in-Chief dying was something new. The full casualty list of our senior officers was to read before the end:—

Commanders-in-Chief ..	5
Chiefs of Staff	8
Army Commanders ..	5
Corps Commanders ..	16

But these all became unstuck (dégommés); Maude was the only one to earn a little wooden cross. Popularly, he may have been absurdly overshadowed by General Townshend. Actually, of all our generals, he may have been second in brilliant achievement only to Allenby.

Taking over command at the darkest hour, he not only conquered Baghdad—by taking a calculated risk—within a year. When he died—not poisoned, but a victim of cholera and sticking to his job—he was rapidly consolidating the whole country under British rule, developing it so that it should be self-supporting, and planning a fresh campaign. All this without any conspicuous accretion of troops.

Let me tell a tale of Maude's soundness. Two days after he had made his classic crossing of the Tigris at Shumrun, and as he was careering ahead towards Baghdad (end of February, 1917), Nazim Pasha, commanding the retreating Turkish Sixth Army, wirelessed in code to the German chief of staff, Kritchmeyer, at Mosul (of whom he stood in holy terror):—

"WE CANNOT HOLD THE DIALA."

The Diala was the last river and the last defensive position before Baghdad, lying some nine miles south of Haroun, and directly General Beech's Intelligence Staff decoded the intercepted message, Maude—whose strategy had to be submitted to Whitehall—cabled home saying that he proposed continuing his advance. Whereupon the War Office—in all fairness, it was ignorant of that wireless information—cabled back in as many words:—

"YOU ADVANCE AT YOUR OWN RISK."

Faced by this, and with Mespot's black record to look back on, a lesser soldier might have shrunk from the hazard. Maude threw in the Manchesters and then let loose his finest cavalry—with what result we know.

It is hard, when talking of the dead, to have to turn aside from praise, yet the story of Sir Stanley Maude would be incomplete if I did not mention one unknown handicap under which he made his advance on Baghdad in 1916-17. When we entered the city of the Caliphs in March, 1917, we found in the Turkish post office a copy of our secret signals code. It had been left on a table with a note in English thanking us for having used it for so long. Formerly, in April, 1916, it had been carelessly left in a drawer at General Townshend's headquarters, before the surrender, at Kut. As we did not change the code until the September following, everything we signalled or put into the air in the interim had been as good as handed to the enemy—and Signals were very heavy functioners. For Townshend's adventure the previous year, hundreds of miles away from his base with the 6th Indian Division—a mad careering which led to Ctesiphon and Kut—there was some mitigation in the deception emanating from desert mirages (the enemy being "sighted" when he didn't exist) and which were responsible for a measure of that Division's erratic behaviour. But touching the siege of Kut, a darker matter requires attention. Lord Kitchener, in his closing months, did his utmost to ensure the relief of the garrison, sending out two fresh divisions, the plan being for Generals Aylmer and Gorringe to attack in bulk before Kut when these reinforcements brought the British strength up to two full army corps. But day after day from Kut came wireless calls saying that the place was about to fall, and in the result the two leading divisions were, in answer to these appeals, largely frittered away in tragic local attacks meant to relieve a situation which did not in effect exist in such desperateness, Townshend holding out for several weeks after his first S.O.S.—indeed he was asking for gramophone needles to be dropped days after his would-be relievers had spent their last offensive strength in driblets against the Turk. By that time all had been put in to attack piecemeal almost as and when each unit arrived from the base (so serious did the S.O.S. calls appear) whereas the planned general mass assault of the whole relieving force together, might have, probably would have, secured the relief of Kut, and spared its white garrison their subsequent dreadful suffering and death in the sun-baked Anatolian plain. Had Townshend said from the start, " We can hold out four weeks," instead of saying every second day that he was at the end of his tether when events proved he was not, there might have been a different story to tell.

A brave and talented officer General Townshend was, and one who came within an ace of bringing off a very long shot at Ctesiphon. But he was also too much of an individualist, too reckless, too unthinking (how else could he have accepted that species of parole on the Bosphorus, far from his martyred men?) and a bringer only of misfortune—which fact did not, however, hinder his being the only officer to be spontaneously acclaimed on his return to England, reminder of the unchanging popular attitude towards all soldiers who become involved in sieges.

To return to lighter fare, the Mespot I found at the close of 1917 was, compared with the fearful report of the previous year, almost a gala affair—with country clubs, sahib splendour, next-to-no-war, and everything on ice, including ourselves if we got heatstroke. The famous topical alphabet of the country imputing a long string of local miseries to Eve's fruity behaviour in Eden, up the Shatt-el-Arab, was now much of a dead letter. Here are some of its verses that will pass the censor:—

A. Was an apple which grew, so they say,
In the Garden of Eden, down Kurnah way,
Till Eve came along and ate it one day,
And was thrown out of Mesopotamia.

B. Is the biscuit which comes from old Delhi,
It breaks all your teeth and plays h——l with your be——y,
And it grinds your poor insides into a jelly,
In the land of Mesopotamia.

C. Is the poor old Indian Corps
Which went to France and fought in the war
Now it gathers the crops and fights no more,
In the land of Mesopotamia.

D. Is the digging we've all of us done,
Since first we started to fight the Hun,
And by now we have shifted ten thousand ton
Of "matti" in Mesopotamia.

E. Is the energy shown by the staff
Before the much-advertised " Hannah " strafe.
Yet the net result was—the Turks had the laugh
Of our Staff in Mesopotamia.

H. Are the Harems, all which, it appears,
Have flourished in Baghdad, for hundreds of years,
We hope to annex the poor destitute dears
When their husbands leave Mesopotamia.

I. Is the Indian Government, but
On this point, I'm told, I must keep my mouth shut,
For it's all due to them that we failed to reach Kut-
El-Amara in Mesopotamia.

J. Is the Jam with the label that lies
And says that in Paris it won the first prize;
We use it out here for catching the flies
Which abound in Mesopotamia.

K. Are the Kisses from lips sweet and fair,
Which are waiting for us round Leicester Square,
When we wend our way home after spending a year
Or two in Mesopotamia.

L. Is the Loot we hope we shall seize—
Wives and wine and bags of Rupees,
When the Mayor of Baghdad hands over the keys
To the British in Mesopotamia.

M. Is the local Mosquito, whose bite
Keeps us awake all the hours of the night
And makes all our faces a horrible sight
In this land of Mesopotamia.

N. Is the Navy, that's tied to the shore,
They've gallons of beer and fresh stores galore.
Oh! I wish I had joined the old Navy before
I visited Mesopotamia!
(and so on).

Basra, the base, one found a kaleidoscopic jumble of everything Arabic, Indian, and British, with the natives fairly bewildered by their sudden and simultaneous introduction to the steam-engine, the liner, the kinema, the telephone, the aeroplane, the Ford, the newspaper, the gramophone, wireless, electric light and white nursing sisters. All these things we—presto—had pitched into the cradle of the world. But we, too, had our surprises—as with the women of Zobeir, who kept harems of painted husbands and formed the best working parties Tommy could collect. Astonishing weights these bints would pile up on their heads, such as a score of 6-lb. boxes of dates. And at the noon-day hour one beheld these dark, coarse, massive Amazons suckling their babies, who would afterwards be taken back home by the Painted Husbands.

The 400-mile river journey up to Baghdad took over a week. This was not due to any defect in our excellent paddle-vessel—one of a fleet which paddled the whole way out from the Clyde, to arrive only two short—but because of the low state of the Tigris and its incessantly shifting bottom causing us to go ashore about ten times a day. Also we had to tie up each dusk, when sentries would be posted to prevent Marshmen crawling on board and cutting our throats for loot. Getting us off our mudbanks would be a stupendous engine-room affair, making the atmosphere unbreathable even on deck. The country we were passing through having rightly been christened " Five Hundred Miles of Dam-All," we spent most of our time reading, playing cards, and throwing backsheesh to the Marsh tribelets following us along the bank offering us eggs and wailing interminably, " One anna!" The unmarried girls, aged about ten, would also unwind their gaudy cotton wrappings and prance for our edification until their prospective husbands—horrid fellows—caught sight of them.

Others aboard followed the twin Mesopotamian phases of setting out to learn Arabic and flirting with the nursing sisterhood. This latter demonstration constituted the hall-mark of rawness, but seldom did the attack last longer than a few weeks. Once our skipper related how he had had a particularly attractive sister as passenger who came to him pleading to be freed of the too-pressing attentions of overheated young bloods straight down from the Indian hills and fairly swept off their feet by this first contact with a pretty white girl. The Captain's resourceful stratagem on that occasion was to segregate Sister by day out on a gun-platform for'ard, her exclusiveness lasting for the rest of the voyage.

Excitement en route was provided (a) by a search for apples and serpents on the reputed site of the Garden of Eden at Kurnah; (b)

Ezra's charming blue tomb, being gradually picked away by military transients; (c) Amara, where we took on sisters, heard the wonderful Cambrai news, but also of the full measure of Caporetto; (d) Kut, with its hyena and Marsh Arab pawed-up battle-ground (we later buried bombs with our dead to keep them undefiled); (e) Ctesiphon Arch, by which we so nearly rode to a magical conquest. That is about all one really saw, but I was fortunate indeed in meeting Colonel Leachman for part of the journey, for what this officer (murdered in 1920) did not know of the Arabs, Marsh and Nomad, well, must scarcely have been worth knowing. Leachman was the Romantic of the "White Tabs" Intelligence organisation of Mespot and a major portion of his job in connection with the 1,000,000 natives in our zone would be keeping some sixty tribes and sub-tribes in a state of constant friction one with the other (divide and rule), thereby rendering it impossible for them to stab us in the back. Yea, sometimes that which was done east of Suez in the name of the British Raj would be odd in the extreme; as when a tribe of Sunnis would be manœuvred by us into carrying off the girls of a neighbouring Shiaz settlement. This, in Mesopotamia, is the insult direct, meaning "Your women are too low for us to intermarry with. But we don't mind them as concubines," and long-drawn-out and exhausting tribal vendettas and internecine strife would ensue, which was, alackaday, much what we hoped for. The sheikh of a stout Nomad tribe might have as many as two thousand of the fleetest horsemen in the world, and these would wreak all the havoc the " White Tabs " required for the time being.

Mention of Leachman puts me in mind of the true circumstances of this dare-devil officer's end. Demi-officially (which is not the same thing as semi-officially but implies that Authority has permitted a certain thing to get about) one was informed that Leachman was treacherously shot down by the son of a Sheikh whose tent hospitality he had accepted for the night, near Faluja, during the troubles of 1920. Actually what happened was this:—

Leachman had perhaps the shortest temper and most explosive temperament in a land of quick tempers and violent outbursts. He also used invariably to carry a hunting crop with which he would sometimes only threaten, at other times chastise recalcitrant natives. The thing may have been, was, necessary in those perilous times. But the gallant Colonel was always asking for trouble. In fact a dramatic enough and quite true assessment of Leachman's perilous journeys and still more perilous behaviour on them, was the following: that he felt he had to keep on doing the most desperately reckless things simply because that was how he had made his name and imposed himself on the Arabs. Here, then, you had a vividly intelligent man who probably knew quite well that one day he would go too far yet who felt impelled to incur ever greater risks lest he should lose his panache. As for instance, let me tell of one such typical piece of Leachman's dare-devilry, foolhardiness, blind bravery—call it what you will. Or, better still, let me give you things in the words in which they were related to me by the only other Englishman present, Major N. of the Political Branch:—

" Leachman and I were sent on ahead to take over the surrender of a Turkish garrison after the bust-up in Eighteen. Somewhere round Mosul. It was a dreadfully hot day and we were walking our ponies up the last hill to the Turkish barracks, fairly sweating blood, when Leachman glanced up and saw that the Turkish flag was still flying on the building. Well, we were exactly two, plus half-a-dozen of useless local levy stuff, and the Turk was drawn up fully armed and a hundred and fifty strong presumably ready to surrender to us. It was a moment to go warily—remember the show had only been ended a day or two and there we were coming up hill straight at them, and hardly able to breathe. But did that bother Leachman? Not on your life! What did he do but curse the Turkish Bimbashi till the sweat rolled down his face and then order him—before his own men—to pull down the Turkish Crescent and run up the Union Jack in its place! I tell you it fairly put the fear of God in me. Any second I thought the tension would snap and that they'd break out and massacre us. But they didn't—they seemed mesmerized by Leachman's look, even the Bimbashi, who promptly and humiliatingly proceeded to do what he was told. I breathed again. But only for a second or so . . .

" 'And now,' Leachman was saying, still addressing himself to the Bimbashi, and in Turkish so that all present could understand, 'now you will take this flag of yours which you've just hauled down and you will wipe my pony with it.'

" That was the sort Leachman was—dotty as hell. I've lived through some pretty nifty moments in my job but I tell you that grooming down of Leachman's sweating and frothing pony by a Turkish senior officer, with the Turkish national flag, in an armed Turkish square, was just about the outside edge. The flag finished a bundle of muck."

Just such a piece of foolhardiness, it was, which was to bring Leachman his death. Everybody told him he was walking into it at Faluja, the whole desertside having risen. Leachman just laughed—and went. And when on his arrival at the station at Faluja he was met by the chief local Sheikh's son, and found that the arrangements made were not to his liking, he appeared in the act of bringing his famous hunting crop down on that proud youngster's shoulders when a shot rang out and Colonel Leachman had measured his length forever.

But he had not yielded his panache.

. . . Baghdad I preferred in the still emptiness of night, its domes and minarets silhouetted against the moon. By day it was too noisy, dusty, sordid, glaring, evil-smelling—with the veiled Baghdadi girls, also the Jewesses and fair Kurdish lassies, as the chief offenders on the last-named score, with their asphyxiating greases, scents, and lotions. The luckiest was the Navy, moored in mid-stream in Fly-boats and out of the human " gas " zone. Not having much to do during my stay, I perhaps spent more time than was good for Mr. Cox, in Shepheard's Hotel, the Officers' Club, and at the Gaiety—a hall off the bazaar, where dreadful bints moaned English songs and did nautch stuff, duly regulated according to whether burra or only chota sahibs were in front. If the A.P.M. was there—nothing doing. But if the all-clear should be given, then it was heigho! and no censorship, the native audience, squatted below round coffee and sweatmeats and hookahs, fairly gurgling with joy. Marycka and Zacchia were the Evelyn Laye and Gertie Lawrence of Baghdad twelve years ago (poor Marycka only had one eye), and later you would see them being shepherded away on donkeys into the night, jealously shielded from mashers in tarboosh and abbas. Our negative attitude towards most local feminine blandishments secured the occupying British Army a pungent nickname that it certainly never earned before in all its history.

One figure—to which I paid but scant attenton at the time—I used to meet most mornings on my canter through those native graves strewn about anywhere, everywhere. A serious white woman tramping alone, eyes down. Gertrude Bell—the " Baghdad end " of Colonel Leachman.

Gertrude Bell's letters look to have been censored and cut about. Perhaps that may account for Lawrence only having been mentioned once or twice in them. Or, again, that may not be the reason. At any rate, why suppress that Miss Bell died much of a disappointed woman? In these days when we hear so much about women going to boss the show, may it not be as well to ponder that here also—with this brave, pioneer Englishwoman of the desert sands—was relative failure, in no small measure due to climate, it is true, but also deriving from other considerations?

Ever grappling with the principal millstone round her neck in that part of the world—her sex—Miss Bell would courageously go far out of her way to show how she trusted her tribesmen, sometimes incurring risks as great as Leachman, if of a different order, to demonstrate her faith. Nor did she ever tire at subsequent lectures of emphasising her immunity from molestation—

> " . . . and never has a hand as much as
> touched the flap of my tent . . ."

albeit on occasion such tributes, in view of her stern and masculine appearance, may have failed to strike precisely the note desired.

On my return down the Persian Gulf my life was saved by the *Morning Post*. Through sleeping on an icicled deck pneumonia threatened, and when I was landed at Kut the situation was not improved by my being placed in a vast tent through whose four flapping apertures blew icy blasts straight down from the "Pushdekoo."

But then it was that a companion, sacrificing his treasured mail from home, bound and rebound me in a dozen copies of the said newspaper, thus adequately keeping out the draught as only paper can.

THE GERMAN LAWRENCE

What a pity it is that German books on 1914-18 —such as exist—are so unattractive and so ponderous.* Hindenburg's "Aus Meinem Leben" and that class of work. No straightforward vital experiences, novels by the man-in-the-trench, as it were. Or if there have been, most of these were so drenched in nauseating analysis as to render them unpalatable. Not long ago one or two attempts were made by Germans to tell of glorious German deeds and enterprises in the War (the "Seeadler's" piracy, for example) but broadly speaking the ex-Allies and their ex-Associate have had it all their own way in the matter of literary battening on the catastrophe. Moreover, one understands how this has primarily come about. German heaviness apart, it is not done to resurrect the late War in Germany. And, of course, for good reason. However great the glory garnered for nearly four years, the ending was such a nightmare as to blot that all out. Germans do not wish to hear tell, in speech or printed word, more than can possibly be helped. That is why German youth has been switched on to the times of der alte Fritz (Frederick the Great). Scarce a young German in all the Fatherland will talk to you of the late unpleasantness. But the odds are he will shove old Frederick down your throat till you protest. All the martial lore of Deutschland ueber alles—lore so necessary to German sustenance—is now drawn from the eighteenth century when Germany was down, as now, and surrounded by a Europe-in-arms, also as now. From old man Fritz the younger generation draws a good deal of its moral reconstruction much as it draws its physical upbuilding from enthusiastic submission to old man Jahn, the father of gymnastics, and who undertook to put Prussia on the forward track again, following Jena, if every man and youth of that day placed body culture before all else. But this is wandering somewhat afield from bookland.

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*Written before "Grischa" translation.

Of thrilling German War books, I know only one—that gun-captain's account of Jutland as viewed from the mast of one of von Scheer's battle-cruisers. Here, therefore, however imperfectly and inadequately, I propose to fill in a little of the blank side of the canvas and tell of a German War hero of whose prowess I doubt if one German in a hundred (much less one Englishman) has ever heard: Wassmuss of Persia. Yet this brave and resourceful German

—he was in the late thirties at the time of which I write—was almost as legendary a figure among those in the know east of Suez as came to be the great Lawrence himself. But perhaps the extent of his ramifications may be better appreciated if I stress the following:—

Twice monthly our General Staff (Intelligence) at the War Office was wont to print and circulate a comprehensive map purporting to indicate the distribution of the enemy's forces in all Eastern theatres of war. Over one entire corner of this map—the farthest—was the word, printed in red and enclosed by an ellipse, " Wassmuss." The area covered by this solitary word equalled many times that of the United Kingdom. The whole of this country, Southern Persia, was under the influence of the German Consul, Wassmuss—that was what the inscription on the map inplied.

Wassmuss was as thoroughgoing and skilful a representative of German pre-war penetration to places in the sun as was ever bred by the Berlin Colonial Office. He had all the tricks. Before the War his consulate at Bushire used to be the most arresting of all local offices and headquarters. The Kaiser himself, erstwhile prancer around the Holy Land on a white steed, took a personal interest in the young consul and saw that the latter's life was set in flamboyant and luxurious surroundings on the principle of dazzling the native at the expense, chiefly, of the more retiring and drabber Albion in that region.

The prize, of course, that the Emperor was after, consisted of the oilfields which Berlin devoutly hoped would one day feed the German Fleet and not (as they do to-day) the British. The position in Persia at the outbreak of hostilities in the West, was a curious one. There was a kind of war on locally; and then again, officially, there wasn't. Under an international agreement, a Swedish, i.e., neutral gendarmerie was there to preserve the status quo, but these, it was soon discovered, Wassmuss had had little difficulty in buying over. In November, 1914, therefore, an earnest effort was made to capture the latter but he slipped through our cordon. How Wassmuss got away on this first and all-important occasion illustrates the fellow's wit and daring. He had actually been taken, and his kit had been sealed up for dispatch with him down to H.Q. on the coast, when he proceeded to develop an abnormal concern for the state of his pony, tied up below the room which had been allotted him. Wassmuss kept getting up throughout the night and going downstairs to see the animal which he said was sick. For several hours the guard of four—Wassmuss was a heavy, thick-set man and no risks were being taken—dutifully followed him back and forth, up and down, but there came a time, towards dawn, when the guard let the prisoner go down to the stable alone . . . they were so sleepy . . . and that was the last that was seen of Herr Wassmuss who had banked on precisely such a lapse from duty eventually occurring. Worse, the fugitive found time to carry off several cases of gold from among his kit. Actually, the amount he got away with on this occasion totalled £7,000 in gold—and here is a strange circumstance about that bullion: it was part of the indemnity paid by France to Germany after 1870 and had reposed in Berlin vaults for over forty years prior to its being sent out to Wassmuss in August, 1914 (naturally this was merely a driblet of the grand total in cash that he received from home to buy the good graces of the Persians).

Knowing Persian intimately, also conversant with and inured to nasty native ways, Wassmuss retired for a spell up country, taking with him his precious cargo. His self-set mission was to do approximately the same as Lawrence later set about doing for us in Arabia, namely: to act as German agent, to hold Southern Persia as far as possible under German influence, to provoke local tribes against us, to hinder our oil dealings, in sum to make things as unpleasant as possible, locally, for John Bull. If he did not engage in so much actual scrapping as Lawrence, Wassmuss may well have achieved more concrete results from year to year. And through all this tense period of strife it is in his favour that we only had cause to chalk up one bad mark against him. This had to do with his descent upon, and capture of the small British community at Shiraz, including Consul O'Connor. The Persians let everyone go later, in return for ransom, but the unpleasant circumstance remained that Wassmuss had tried hard to persuade the locals to hand him over one of the English girl captives. When long after—in 1920—Wassmuss was taxed with this, he did not deny it, merely confining himself to the observation that life was very dull and crude in Persia at that time, without feminine society from the West.

While on the subject, I do not think a ludicrous scene which followed this Shiraz rebuff to Britain has ever been told. At Bushire, where German and British consuls still remained, a young Indian cavalry sahib decided that something must be done about it. He had quaffed copiously and eventually hit upon the notion of climbing up the flag-staff at the German Consulate and supplanting the German flag with the Union Jack. With much labour he managed to get to the top, but then it was that the German Consul heard sounds—it was in the middle of the night—and ventured forth to investigate.

Seeing a British officer up topside, he at once took in the situation.

" Gum down slowly," he cried up, " I go get glazz beer!"

Which the old sport duly did; fetching out a frothing tankard and handing it to the panting, perspiring young sahib as the latter touched solid ground once more!

Wassmuss had spies throughout Persia. One of the best of these was Dr. Lindberg, caught by us in 'fifteen. That also led to rather a priceless scene. As a protest against his apprehension, which he said was a breach of neutrality, Lindberg took off his breeches in the centre of Bushire and declined to put them on again under any circumstances. It might have been thought that this wouldn't have mattered much in wartime but apparently it did. For one thing there were white women about. Again, the white sahib, no matter of what nationality, must not be publicly held up to ridicule in the East. At all events, Lindberg's semi-nude condition led to several protracted pow-wows. How to get him down to the coast and away, without a scandal?

Various enticements were flaunted before the good Herr Doktor. But no. Nothing doing. His breeches he steadfastly refused to pull on.

Finally, however, a bright lad had a brain wave.

"Lindberg's awfully keen on Frau X.," pointed out this strategist, "and she's down at the base. If we arrange things so that she passes near him, I'll bet he'll put his breeks on—you watch!"

The stratagem was acted upon. After a last effort to bring him to reason, Lindberg was conveyed down country breechesless, and just when he thought his demonstration had succeeded, the terrible words were spoken in his ear:—

"Frau X. is approaching, Doctor. Would you care to put your breeches on?"

Lindbergh flushed scarlet as he saw his adored one bearing innocently down upon him; then he caved in and cried out for his breeches.

"But the funniest sight of all," related the O.C. of that merry column to me, "was Lindbergh pulling on his breeks against time behind a cactus bush. Not trusting him one second, after Wassmuss, four Sepoys stood over him with their bayonets pointing down to within an inch of . . . well, of the place Lindbergh had at last agreed to cover up!"

. . . But for three companions (two Germans and a Swiss) Wassmuss employed only pure-bred Persions as agents, not a few belonging to the highest families of the land, though he was also quite ready to use humble fishermen when the occasion suited. By means of his agents, the lone German managed to sustain uninterrupted communication with Liman von Sanders in Constantinople—in itself no mean military performance if we bear in mind that the state of our military preparations in India, the disposition of our forces in Mesopotamia and the dispatch of British-Indian troops to all theatres of war, constituted the brand of information of which the enemy C.-in-C. thus became cognisant.

It is certain that Wassmuss's long-drawn-out watch on Mesopotamia contributed in a measure to our discomfiture in that sad land. Owners of big sailing-craft plying between India and Persia brought him all manner of information; so did fishermen who saw troopships passing and communicated their size to Wassmuss who would calculate the approximate effectives on board.

One or two conspicuous failures—notably when he sought to stir up trouble in Afghanistan—did not deter Wassmuss in the least. Rather was he spurred to fresh effort, for in 1916 we find him immobilizing not only thousands of troops but no fewer than four British warships which were being constantly employed in the Gulf endeavouring to intercept dhows bringing him munitions! Indeed, in truly heroic vein, as his star waned, Wassmuss rose to greater heights of sheer one-man prowess, keeping himself going half the time with brazenly faked propaganda.

Thus, when we attacked on the Somme, and the good Persians were beginning to ponder that, after all, the British Raj seemed to have a little kick still left in him, Wassmuss countered by announcing in Ahram that the Germans had not only invaded England but that they had publicly executed the afore-mentioned Raj! Of course the thrilling news spread far and wide.

At this time—or not long after—we offered a reward of two lakhs of rupees for Herr Wassmuss who, at the outset of 1917, thought it politic to reinforce his disintegrating position among the Persians by taking to wife the daughter of a headman of Ahram. He even turned Mahommedan, which dual change, added to his long-acquired native robes and regular falling-in with Persian habits and food, rendered his situation tolerably secure for the rest of that year. In fact only when things began to go definitely groggy for the Central Powers, were murmurings and mutterings again heard around Ahram.

Soon, with news of the Foch offensive percolating through, the Persians called outright for the blood of the infidel who had put and kept them on the wrong horse. To stave off the evil day, Wassmuss poured out paper promises to pay, but one day things came to a head. There was talk of summary execution, and Wassmuss was called upon to explain, in the heart of his town.

A solitary white man, who had fought and lost, hemmed in by thousands of bloodthirsty natives screaming for their money and for vengeance! Then, I think, it was that Wassmuss rose to his sublimest height of audacity. He appeared with an ordinary wooden pole with some coiling and other hastily contrived gadgets attached. Summoning all to instant silence, he placed the pole in the ground, and " rang up " the Caliph in Constantinople, the Commander of the Faithful, the Shadow of God upon Earth, and " told him," out loud in local dialect, how he was being threatened in far-off Persia.

Open-mouthed, the surrounding Persians listened.

Soon—when Wassmuss turned to them and informed them (having previously mimicked a conversation with the Caliph) of the precise form of wrath that exalted one threatened to visit upon them if as much as a hair of his (Wassmuss's) head were touched—they gapingly melted away, leaving Wasmuss amusedly contemplating the long distance "wireless telephone" that had saved his life.

Where is he now and why doesn't he write his wonderful tale of which the foregoing is but the merest string of incident? The last I know is that he was arrested by us in 1920 in Turkey.

"Revolt in the Oilfields" would perhaps not be so opulently written a tale as "Revolt in the Desert," yet I am not sure if its publication might not cause a deal of expert opinion to plump for "The German Lawrence" regarding actual concrete results achieved. After all, "T.E." never drew off and immobilized four Turkish men-of-war!

A BRUSH WITH SAHIBLAND

STEAMING down the Shatt-el-Arab, through the Persian Gulf and across the Indian Ocean to Karachi, the temperature in December changes radically hour by hour. Getting gradually warmer, the clothes one dons at breakfast-time may be altogether too heavy by tiffin. The voyage took five days and it was a satisfying experience having the run of a brand-new, empty, British-India liner, at a net personal cost of a few rupees in gratuities. The Government paid a shipping company six shillings a day for messing an officer at sea—in addition of course, to acquiring each vessel on lease as a transport.

On Christmas Eve, a still summer's night, we were challenged by H.M.S. *Sapphire*, then actively on the look-out for the German Corsair *Wolf*. After much preliminary morse flashing from one vessel to the other, during which our native crew dashed about the deck shouting and waving life-belts, a boarding party put off from the light cruiser and rowed towards us, the little white cutter, with its complement of officers and men in white ducks, making a vivid sea picture in the bright moonlight. Swinging quickly up the side, an officer with revolver and cartridges on his belt made direct for the bridge, examined our papers, signalled back "O.K." to his ship, after which commenced social amenities.

Boarding officer: "Do you mind posting these letters at Karachi? We've been out here now for six weeks and don't see much chance of getting into port yet awhile."

Captain: "Certainly. And we've collected a pile of papers here for you. Some of them are rather old—from London via Baghdad—but you're probably hard up for something to read."

Boarding Officer: "Should just think we are! Splendid fellow! Well, 'spect you want to be getting along now."

Captain: "Half a moment. It's Christmas Eve, remember. Here's a cake for *Sapphire* with the compliments of the *Aronda*."

Profuse thanks, upon which the boarding officer regained his cutter, the two vessels flashing "A Merry Xmas" to one another as we drew off, leaving *Sapphire*, lights out and alone, on silent sentinel in the Indian Ocean.

No one went ashore next evening at Karachi. They preferred the good cheer offered in Babu French on the *Aronda:*

MENU

Hors d'œuvre
Potage a la Chasseur
Aspic de Saumon
Poisson Fumé
Aspic de Perdreaux
Cottelettes de Mouton aux Petits Pois
Petits Pois a la Mâitre da hôtel
Poitrine de Veau Rôti
Pâté de Captin
Dindon Roti et Jambon Bouillé
Asparages Sauce Vainaigrette
Plum Dough
Fruit Tart
Mince Pie
Christmas Cake
Malabar Ice Cream
Assorted Cakes
Dessert Coffee
25th December, 1917.

A toast to the Merchant Service (" the Navy has got the safest job afloat " observes a wag) followed, with musical honours, the company meanwhile having pulled crackers and donned paper hats and proceeded to look self-conscious as Englishmen always do when imitating carnival.

Ashore, on Boxing Day, it was 86 in the shade—if any. The serene beauty of one's surroundings, the vivid colour scheme of native dress, the supple grace of the Indian woman and the excellence of roads and buildings and "garrys" compared with Mesopotamia—such were one's first impressions of Karachi. Far more so than Egypt, India seemed to breathe the spell of the East. Alas! one had no time to absorb it. Any spell that may have been working was abruptly shaken off at lunch at the sonorous Sind Club whose very domes echoed to the munching of one's toast. Nor was the oppressive silence lightened, but the contrary, by the compulsory barefoot tread of the native waiter. However, the members were not without a fresh outlook on the War as the following printed notice indicated:—

> As a stimulant to local interest in the War a prize of 1,000 Rupees will be presented to the person giving the best forecast of the War situation as it will be on December 31st.

An "end of the war" sweepstake was also locally afoot. For this, the oncoming five years had been divided into weeks and blanks and one drew a certain week, in which the War might or might not end, or a blank, as luck would have it.

One felt that this side of the War had been inexplicably overlooked in Press competitions at home.

The mail-boat left for Bombay twice a week, and on this occasion the *Linga* was so packed with a multi-coloured, noisy, native throng that not a square foot of deck was visible. On the quay was an even greater crowd, mostly native women with bundles of offspring and come to show their connubial devotion by a good public cry. The sahibs and memsahibs had the promenade deck all to themselves—even certain rich natives, who had purchased first-class tickets, being screened off at one end of it. The sea remained rough throughout, and a more distressing spectacle than that sardine-packed native shipload, men, women and children of all ages, groaning and rolling about the deck, hour after hour, would be hard to conceive.

At dinner our first night out, certain returning warriors experienced a keen pleasure in sitting once again opposite people in evening dress—Bombay merchants and their wives.

"First boiled shirt I've seen for four years," observed a veteran of Kut. "Deuced awkward, though, this sudden civilization again. Don't know how to pass anything. Messing in a tent in the desert doesn't exactly improve one's table manners!"

Conversation, too, only came in fits and starts. Six of those at table had not seen a white woman since the beginning of the War, except sisters, and to-night they were all nerves at the sudden confrontation. The ladies, in fact, had to make all the going—the social success of four years before finding himself now the timid listener. Ah, yes—and I was forgetting one further feature of that voyage: the hors concours appetite of officers of the Merchant Service, even in the tropics. Fruit, porridge, bacon and eggs, kidneys, tripe, steak and potatoes, toast and butter, marmalade, tea or coffee, would be tossed lightly off at breakfast time, while others grew dizzy and sought the deck.

After sunrise on the *Linga* further sleep became impossible. Each morning we would anchor about a mile from shore and proceed to take on boatload after boatload of fresh native passengers, a deafening din ensuing as these tried to clamber with their possessions from the sailing boat below, bobbing up and down in the bumpy sea, on to the gangway swung out from the side of the *Linga*. Where half, at least, would have fallen into the sea had they been white, the natives, especially the women, gave an extraordinary exhibition of agility. Sometimes the sailing boat below would swiftly sink ten or twelve feet in the swell, leaving a native woman hanging in mid-air from the gangway of the larger vessel, but by marvellous contortions she would manage to pull herself on board.

It was Viceroy's week at Bombay—implying the incursion of officialdom from as far north as Karachi and south as Bangalore. Wherever His Excellency appears, local white India gathers round, for 'tis well to step occasionally into the limelight from the backwoods of a hill station, or the effacement of the jungle. And on this occasion there was an additional attraction—Mr. Montagu, striding past the phantoms of Clive and Nicholson and come to say what should be done in India.

" What does this fellow know about India?" indignantly inquired the Anglo-Indian.

" What do they know of India who only India know? " seemed to echo a second, strangely apt, voice.

In Bombay, in Christmas week, it was hard enough to remember there was a war on. Bands and dances, racing, yachting and gymkhanas, the streets fluttering with flags, the vessels in harbour atrim with bunting, the Taj Hotel and Green's Restaurant illuminated at night, reviews and parades with accompanying salvos and salutes, thrillingly gowned memsahibs (looking drawn and pale) at theatre and the Opera, mess-kitted officers in gold braid, scarlet and blue, and replete with miniature medals, the city a blaze of light, and, as for food, hours and stimulant, not as much as a whisper from Dora.

But all this pomp and circumstance, rather stunning to Western war eyes, had its silvery lining. The hospitals of Bombay were nearly all empty, the war in Mesopotamia at a standstill. Apart from which, sack-cloth doesn't go with white rule in India. You have to lord it all the time, whatever befall. As an example, a bachelor subaltern living out of mess, may have to keep eight servants to run a bungalow—a bearer, a khitmutgar, a sais, a cook, a gardener, a sweeper, a dhobi and a watchman. The path of the sahib is, in fact, strewn with financial pitfalls — such as the "chit" system. In gymkhanas and clubs and the like throughout India, people pay not in money, but in "chits" which are handed over by the management at fixed periods for settlement. Many a newcomer has been caught in the vice of such a system.

Yet despite all the exaggerated attention bestowed upon one by native servants, on account of their frequent stupidity, one often got little forrader. The Eurasian alone seemed possessed of a thinking apparatus. Incidentally, the Eurasian appealed to the transient visitor as the real tragedy of India—not the probably entirely happy native of the Ganges or the Indus, nor yet Mrs. Besant's Babu from Bengal via Shepherd's Bush.

Half-English, half-Indian, the father nearly always the former, the Eurasian is despised by the white and treated with contempt by the native. There must be a million or more Eurasians in India, and they form a colony all on their own, the white in them struggling with the taint of colour. They are outside the Pale, yet we—the whites—are responsible for their being of this world at all.

But to judge India by Bombay is to judge England by Liverpool. Like all Eastern cities, its contrasts gripped at first—holy cattle wandering aimlessly about the streets and dodging Fords, sinuous, miniature native women walk-abroad in raiment that would make even a classical dancer wince, stately streets and edifices—for here was a city of the future planned and built without let or hindrance as the architects pleased. An afternoon across the bay at the Temple of Elephanta, where weird gods are worshipped, or a look-in at the Towers of Silence, where the Parsi dead are pecked to pieces daily by vultures, the customary last rite, form the standard excursions of Bombay.

One moment, in this contradictory city, the passer-by is held by the spectacle of native children off for a spree in motor-cars; the next, he is flung back into the dark ages at sight of a ghastly figure, the face painted red, and being carried by sitting bolt upright in a chair—the Hindu burying his dead.

There is little else to see in Bombay beyond Crawford Market, the super-Park Lane abodes of the rich Parsis out Malabar Hill way, and the grandiose Taj Mahal hotel, with its Pantheon-like dome: "The first thing you see of India coming from the West."

This imperious hotel, beside which the Carlton would look like a commercial house, was built by one Tata, a patriotic Parsi merchant prince who desired to construct something in harmony with the projected Golden Gate of India—the latter, a scheme soon abandoned. But the Taj was continued and opened on the most lavish scale, one experiment being the introduction to the East of real, live English chambermaids who all proceeded to get married, leaving Tata high and dry. Nevertheless, the Taj still prospers amazingly.

Because, you see, this sort of thing happens:

The telephone-bell rings in the bureau. It is the (late) Maharajah of Indore.

"Please engage the whole of the second floor for His Highness for Christmas week."

And in due course His Highness arrives with seven Wolseley cars and a wife, and proceeds to spend rupees at the rate of a thousand an hour or more.

He had been installed for several days when we arrived, only to be told the hotel was full. Fortunately, however, my companion, an Indian Army officer, knew a thing or two about the country.

"Any Maharajas here?"

"Yes, Sahib. The Maharajah of Indore."

"Oh, old Indore? I must look him up. What suite's he got?"

"His Highness has taken the whole of the second floor, Sahib. A hundred rooms, so that no one may disturb him, Sahib."

"Oh, right ho! Thanks very much!"

And turning to me, my companion observed: "Splendid. We're fixed up all right. The old boy's got the whole floor. We can easily bribe a bearer to open a couple of rooms."

Which was duly done. And so did it come to pass that for the next three days we stayed at the Taj as the uninvited guests of unsuspecting "old Indore."

All officers passing through were granted honorary membership of the Bombay Yacht Club on the Apollo Bunder, but a more engrossing afternoon was to be spent in the lounge of the Taj across the way. Here Maharajas and Ranees listened to the latest revue and musical comedy tunes, sipping water. While cheek by jowl with them sat memsahibs of a Bandman touring company, laughter holding both their sides, and sipping . . . crême-de-menthe.

At dinner in the vast restaurant everybody knew everybody else—*or didn't.* Plainly the whole atmosphere was weighted with criticism, spoken or unspoken.

" There are those terrible people who were up at Poona, George."

" Yes, dear."

" I wonder whom she's after now?"

" I wonder, dear."

The fierce relentless social struggle that must go on in a close concern like white India, the gossip, the scandal, the pettiness, the jealousies, seemed writ across that restaurant in the Taj on New Year's Eve.

As for the officers of Bombay, they were well in the swim. Chins turned up, trouser ends turned down—this latter being most important.

" Officers in uniform must wear the trousers turned down," the notice was placarded on all sides and in the most unexpected places. So much so, that at a performance of the " Maid of the Mountains," at the Excelsior, I was tapped on the shoulder by an A.P.M.'s " devil " and bidden to turn my trouser ends down forthwith.

" But they're sewn up," I pleaded.

“ Can’t help that. You must either turn them down or leave. Orders. Sorry.”

And leave I had to. Gnashing and seething, and only seeking solace eventually in the reflection that enfin c’était la guerre.

CRUSADING BY FORD

I SAILED from the Golden Gate in the P. and O. *Sardinia*, whose skipper might have been well advised to have retained me on board by force seeing that for the third time during my journey I was to act as a kind of anti-Jonah—the good ship joining Davy Jones's locker off Port Said the day after I had disembarked from her at Suez. The voyage afforded a refreshing return to pre-war travel. Nearly all the passengers were civilians, chiefly Anglo-Indian families on their way to join husbands and fathers temporarily serving in Egypt, all such fares being paid by the Government. There was the English Miss who had bagged a tiger and still danced the Polka; the war bride of a year who talked blithely about " our regiment " and thrust forward a locket of her hero at the slightest provocation; the ample Irish lady who sang her way across the ocean; the Indian civil servant who thought Mr. Montagu " an interfering Jew " and still referred to Mr. Lloyd George as " that little Welsh rotter "; the nursing sister who had had two years of it in East Africa and wondered why there had been no East African scandal " because there was ample ground for one."

Then there was the R.A.F. officer who had been dropping bombs in an unknown side-show up in the North-West Provinces; finally the bridge-fiends who glared and growled should an ordinary mortal venture into the saloon. The usual deck games were played, quoits and cricket, and we could wear mufti. But we might not mix with the ship's officers, why, I never knew.

At Aden, during coaling, passengers were allowed ashore for several hours. Aden is a scorching rock and, after Perim opposite, is considered the worst station in the Empire. At the Club one heard of the war at Aden. The day before there had been a show in which we had sustained 28 casualties getting back after raiding the Turks. This war was mainly to protect certain giant oil tanks, and the natives were on a perimeter a few miles away. But it was scarcely a serious campaign in that they used to be regularly admitted into Aden to replenish water and stores. Nevertheless Aden called upon our man-power to the tune of two or three thousand of all ranks.

A hurried look-in on Cairo comes back mainly as Shepheard's plus a blur of fezzed pashas, officers of St. Cyr and of Bersaglieri, fresh Englishwomen in from Gezireh, sun-tanned Highlanders and Australians, Indians, Levantines, French and Italian cocottes of the big luxury, brigadiers galore, and red-caped nursing sisters . . . yet another social whirl of the War, but quite distinctive, its "shop" different, its outlook and appearance no less so. Junketing would be high and free in these times, in Cairo, but no English girls (I mean dancers and the like) ever participated. Under a thirty-year long ban of Lord Cromer's they were barred the country, an act of wisdom that at no time found greater vindication than in 1914-1918.

On the journey from Kantara up to Allenby's G.H.Q. I came in touch with sheikhs for the first time. The Australians having collared the whole train for sprawling purposes, I unconsciously committed the enormity of snuggling down in the corner of a lovely white coach mystifyingly occupied only by a sheikh or two (I later learnt that they were some of Lawrence's friends going round to see Allenby). Soon after I had lain myself down, one sheikh after another rose, glanced down upon me as if I were much untidier than I really was, and stalked from the coach out into the corridor. Here they were found later by their British A.D.C. guide, who proceeded to supply me, in intemperate language, with the reason for their exit.

"Blankety blankety blank! but don't you know these blighters are sheikhs and can't possibly sleep in the proximity of Christians?"

Looking back, each side-show had its pitfalls of this character, social and other, and mighty difficult it would be for one flitting from place to place to keep up with them all. Usually, however, I would be excused as the wearer of green tabs—the first seen in most places. Nobody with green tabs was considered quite normal.

Happily (after France) the Palestine front was a front of surprises at this time, and I was to get mine on my very first morning at breakfast at Allenby's G.H.Q. when a swarthy little fellow rose and bowed in an otherwise unoccupied tent as I entered. Noticing that he wore a major's crown, and not being used to receiving salutes from senior officers, my thoughts were turning automatically to the excessive cheapness of canteen whisky when my companion of the tea-cup surprised me even more by referring to the weather in dreadful English.

Decidedly . . . But no. Unblushingly the Major anticipated me with an explanation. Two days beforehand he had commanded a battalion opposed to us. An Armenian, burning with hatred of the Turks, he had decided to desert with one of his junior officers. He now informed me that he proposed trying to propagand his late battalion into coming over, en bloc, to our lines. (I believe he did so and got the O.B.E.)

This anecdote has perhaps more in it than mere personal reminiscence. It typifies the ever-readiness of Sir E. Allenby and of his Staff to get along with their war by every piece of craft and cunning they could think of, thereby saving hosts of lives. With the possible exception of Lord Cavan on the Piave (many months later), they approached much nearer to how the spectral "next war" may open (in the brain line) than did any of the others.

As a case in point, which other Commanders-in-Chief in the field would have tolerated Colonel Lawrence for ten minutes? Allenby not only tolerated Lawrence, but seems to have been the solitary senior soldier to move that glad rebel to the slightest respect.

So long as they didn't let him down, Allenby gave carte blanche to his Intelligence Staff to go ahead and bamboozle the Turk to the limit of their art. He saw that surprise was worth more than a whole army corps—he may have been in some measure driven to realise this when all his promised reinforcements were diverted to Amiens and the Lys in early 1918—anyway, nothing, however small, was turned down so long as it was shown that it contributed to the general hoodwinking of the enemy as to our battle intentions. Under Allenby, Intelligence in the field reached its fullest, and it may well be its final expansion—namely, that of pulling the enemy's leg clean off regarding what we intended doing. Nor may this have been so exclusively due to local setting, for in the old days in Artois Allenby's Third Army used always to have the reputation for pushing ideas.

It is not possible, nor would it be well advised, to set down here the several minutely and patiently planned hoaxes by which the Turk was, in part, crumpled up in Palestine. Such a hoax took weeks to stage—every aspect of it, every likely reaction, having to be weighed beforehand. This was called " making it watertight." Of the famous episode of the " Lost Haversack," I told some years ago. Also the hoax of the Hotel Fast, Jerusalem. Both succeeded wonderfully—the former causing the Turk to draw off from Beersheba, enabling the Desert Corps to outflank him, and the latter opening a free road, by surprise, for our troops to crash through in the Joppa-Jaffa sector on September 19th, 1918, a crash which did not terminate until Aleppo and the end. These two major and classic hoaxes had, in turn, perforce to consist of and repose on all manner of lesser and subsidiary hoaxes, one of which—quite a trivial one, still a tiny cog in the whole—I was privileged to work out.

The affair of the "Lost Haversack" I shall always remember for personal reasons. Briefly, it hinged on one of our staff officers dropping a haversack, when on mounted reconnaissance patrol near the Turkish lines. Forthwith the extreme importance of certain documents contained in the haversack was notified on all sides —by special G.R.O., by wireless, by word of mouth.

"Gawd blimey!" said the E.E.F. "This 'ere bloody staff of ours gives me the pip! Can't go out for an afternoon's pleasure without givin' the whole show away!"

At least, with aspirates in place, that was just about how I was received when I motored out to mess, on the night of the regrettable occurrence, at 20th Corps. The strafe on G.H.Q. continued, in fact, as the conversational leit motif throughout dinner.

"Deuced bad for morale, you know, this kind of thing. Thought Allenby'd stopped all this tommyrot." And so on.

I don't know that I have ever found it more difficult to keep silent than that night.

Knowing, as I did, that the contents of that haversack had been brilliantly faked to mislead the enemy, and that, far from cursing a certain officer for dropping it purposely under a Turkish post, all present should have risen and drunk to a very gallant gentleman. . . .

Shortly before leaving Palestine (motoring down to El Arish over one of those astonishing wire-netting roads laid out for scores of miles over the sand in all directions, an idea of genius making for the local triumph of the Ford) I met Colonel Lawrence, in from one of his railway raids. Met? No, hardly that. Saw. Beheld, outside the Mess into which he would not enter, never feeding with others.

What can one add that is accurate to the astonishing publicity that this veritable "Q" man of war has already enjoyed—or deplored? I have read most Lawrensiana, to find one or two things missing. For example, I always understood, when on the spot and in close touch with "I," that one of Lawrence's main uses was in cutting the Turkish telegraph lines between Damascus and Mecca, thereby causing the enemy to fall back upon wireless, which invariably we were able to decode in a very short while. His attempted train-wrecking was hardly looked upon as any more important than this. On the other hand, his harrying with his Arabs on the Turkish left *did* sensibly lessen the main British burden, causing the Turk to move several units from time to time from our front.

A second point which really ought to be cleared up, in justice to history, concerns the circumstances of Lawrence's hurried departure from the scene of his activities at the end of October, 1918. Lawrence himself ends his "Revolt" without giving a why or a wherefore. Mr. Robert Graves says:

> "When Feisal had gone, Lawrence made Allenby the first and last request that he had ever made for himself—leave to go away. For a while Allenby would not give it, but Lawrence pointed out how much easier the change from war to peace conditions would be for the Arabs if his influence were removed. Allenby understood and gave his permission, and then Lawrence at once realised how sorry he was to be going."

With all due respect, this sounds to me distinctly unconvincing—particularly that part about L. being desirous of removing his influence from his Arab friends just after he had sailed into Damascus at their head against all orders.

Here is another version which was current in Intelligence at the time (I do not say it is correct, and will be very ready to recall it).

When the C.-in-C. learnt that Lawrence was Rolls-Roycing ahead of the Australian Cavalry with the intention of proclaiming Damascus, the Arab capital, he jumped into a second R.R. and dashed off after him. Meeting. Words. L. is told to take the next boat home and report at the War Office. L. demurs. Seeks to impress upon the C.-in-C. the danger of not giving the Arabs full satisfaction.

C.-in-C.: "That's my business."

The story even continued that months after, when Lawrence reappeared at Alexandria, saying that he desired to collect his kit and personal belongings, he was met on the quay by a staff officer, who went inland to collect the perquisites for him.

Shabby treatment of a hero if true? Yes, and no.

Lawrence is generally accepted as a genius, implying immense brain-power. Should he not then have seen that he was being used by bigger fry? Should he not have grasped that something like the secret Sikes-Picot agreement for the disposal of the spoils must have existed between France and England? So crafty a mind as his ought hardly to have been so unsuspicious of the possible craft of others. May he not have known all along what was in the wind and have hoped, with his star, to out-manœuvre Circumstance with a fait accompli at Damascus—Damascus, his dream, his only goal? Staked all, individualist to the core that he is, and lost nearly all in the gamble, save his own perennial glory?

The Inside Lawrence of Arabia remains in some ways as great a mystery as later became the Inside Shaw of India.

Wasn't oblivion, traceless, trackless oblivion better to be found before the mast or on some South Sea isle than in the Royal Air Force and the Tank Corps? And why, conspicuously, these two most up-to-the-minute branches which will play the leading part in any next war . . . especially in the desert?

Ah, Shaw of India, you have us guessing still . . . some of us, at any rate.

Even as the value of your war effort has come to be challenged (" it wasn't so miraculous at all to do what he did with two million sterling of the taxpayers' money to throw about amongst the Arabs "); even as your character has come to be impugned as vainglorious and self-seeking, leaving the real book about you yet to be written . . . so, also, two views may be held in exalted quarters regarding the exact object of your odd post-war activities. Some may say you just wanted to be plain Shaw scudding about on your " Beelzebub " and leading the raw, natural

Tommy's life; others again have been heard to aver there was long-headed method in your obliteration of Lawrence and successive choice of Arm—that you have not abandoned the grandiose idea, given suitable backing, of a great Arab State with yourself as a kind of Cromer-cum-Rajah Brooke, combined with a dash of Burton.

“ CINDERELLA ”

SOMETHING brooded over Salonika that brooded over no other front. The place was unhealthy and half burnt out; its war-time inhabitants were the refuse of the Levant; the concentrated boredom of the line was utter (with a kind of “ what-on-earth-are - we - fighting - the - Bulgar - for?” abroad); the local Allies could not, or would not, keep off one another's toes; the tragedy of Gallipoli hung over all; the Allies spied upon one another almost more than they did upon the common enemy; the French excelling; strategically the show was a desperately dull stalemate and wash-out. The British used to call Salonika “ Cinderella ” — the neglected and despised front, the butt of all, fed on other people's leavings. In the end “ Cinders ” picked up her skirts and went to the ball with a vengeance, but, oh, the months and years of dreary demoralisation that must have gone before!

I suppose a measure of the malaise sprang from Salonika having been a species of stop-gap political front into which we more or less slipped under the persuasive nudging of Monsieur Briand. At any rate, a certain aimlessness was manifest such as I assimilated nowhere else. Much bad temper amid the unholy Allied jumble was also in the air locally, this being stimulated by the rarity of leave, owing to the U-boats, which also put Salonika on permanently short commons and comforts. Nor was this ill-nature to be wondered at. The confusion and jealous competition of the Base apart, when all the native peasantry were banished from the seventy-mile " behind the lines " stretch separating our entrenched divisions from Salonika (a drastic expulsion made in the interests of counter-espionage), these troops practically never saw a civilian face for months on end—sometimes for six months, they went, without quitting for a minute their own little khaki world.

In the result nerve cases were frequent, breakdown from sheer ennui unrelieved even by the lethargic Bulgar ever perched above us at Doiran. Nor were matters improved by the French being " at their most difficult " throughout; first under the master-intriguer, General Sarrail, and later under " Frankly Desperate " (Franchet d'Esperey). Spying even went on between the various Allied G.H.Q.s in the city. That the Salonikans—Turks, Spanish, Jews, Greeks, Mediterraneans, Balkan half-castes, and several other breeds besides—repeatedly petitioned that control should be given to Generals

Milne and Cory at the Villa Ida, stuck immovably in the French gullet; no small muddle, and not a few of the set-backs we encountered, being directly traceable to the friction thus generated.

(In passing, have military historians paid enough attention, I wonder, to the manner in which the conduct of the War was held up now and then by misplaced, even stupid allied suspicion? It will come as a surprise to many to know that, nearly all through, the French insisted on keeping Hély d'Oissel's 33rd Corps between us and the sea in Flanders. Thinking historically, our Allies declined to risk the B.E.F. exclusively garrisoning the channel ports—the fear apparently being that we might redevelop certain Calais and Dunkirk ideas of other days and decline to move on, later, in certain possible eventualities! This sandwiching-in of a whole French Corps between us and the Belgians lessened local efficiency considerably, making for duplication and confusion, especially on the L. of C. It was also responsible for a protracted espionage scare at G.H.Q., the fear being that spies—of course not Frenchmen—were introducing themselves into our area garbed in the horizon-blue of France. Poilus positively overran our zone, freely in pursuit of mademoiselles, and it was obviously a matter of the greatest delicacy questioning them on their own national territory. This fear of spies masquerading in allied uniforms—the poilu alarm was reinforced by a similar Belgian one—was throughout a preoccupation at G.H.Q. Whether well-founded or no, a parallel suspicion prevailed at one time that one or two allied aviators were in the habit of " landing for tea " in their own country, by German permission, later flying back home again; and naturally enough this led to consideration of a possible leakage of information by such a channel. A queer, long-drawn-out, tacit semi-truce prevailed across the flooded area separating our Belgian Allies from the enemy, and this at least one can vouch for—that certain German sportsmen were wont to go out duck shooting upon that chill expanse of water as wintry dawn would come up over Flanders. Nor would they be unduly incommoded as they paddled this way and that about No Man's Water.)

In Salonika itself my cicerone was a pre-war colleague who now edited the *Balkan News* and was also of service to " I " branch. At tea at Floca's my attention would be directed to the principal local celebrities, including " The Balkan Princess " and Miss Sands, the valiant Serbian soldier in full field kit. As for the Salonikans, their inborn depravity amazed. Like human vultures they preyed on the conflict amid the million odd French, British, Italian, Russian, Serbian and Greek troops based on the city.

Ex-Salonikan Service-men are rightly proud that theirs was the first of the four armistices, yet what an unholy mess it was, locally, for three whole years! The British were stationary pretty nearly all of that time along a 95-mile front divided into three sectors: Orfano - Lake Tahinos, Tahinos-Doiran, Doiran-Vardar. At Orfano we rested on the sea. The second sector, covering some 70 miles, was thinly held, and included the fever-stricken, " steam-heated " Struma Valley. Here we were in places as much as five and six miles from brother Bulgar, both sides retiring to the hills for half the year and contact being kept up by cavalry patrols. I recollect visiting this area with a certain Lieut. N., of my own show, and whose job it was to preside over a fearsome band of comitadjis actually living between the lines in No Man's Land when they were not roving about in Bulgarland, espionage-bent. The merry fellows even had their families with them: bronzed wives and copper children—and all on the ration strength of the British Salonikan Force. Odd war!

The Doiran-Vardar sector was the main centre of activity, almost like war in the West and with trenches often less than a quarter-of-a-mile apart. Here we had very bad losses from time to time, yet, all said and done, our Salonikan Army's principal foe was not the Bulgar, but boredom; boredom acute and absolute and rendered the more severe by the U-boats cutting down to a minimum mails and parcels from home.

The general atmosphere of this Front was adequately conveyed by a remark of the local R.A.F Brigadier when I went to see him:

" Good Lord, I can't spare you any machines! I've only got two aeroplanes for the whole defence of the town—and they're antiquated 'buses!"

At the time I was there (January-February, 1918) the Greeks were at last going to do wonders. I believe some four Greek divisions did eventually get somewhere near the front line, yet Venizelos had little to be proud about. It might have been plainer, certainly safer sailing, had the Allies taken over Salonika entirely, banishing all Greek troops from the rearward zone, for all the use the latter really were in the long run. As things drew out from 1915 to the end, never was such high carnival of treachery and spying held in the wake of any army as behind the Allies at Salonika. The dance was led from the Royal Palace at Athens and it went right down to the lowest skunk in the pay of von Schenck, the German secret service chief. In this connection, I read some time ago in a volume written by a young man when twenty-five, how ex-Queen Sophie indignantly denied trying to monkey with the Allies behind the Macedonian Front. Knowing otherwise, I am afraid this is not here acceptable—nor do I see, viewed from to-day, anything for her ex-Majesty to be ashamed of. She would have been a poor sister, and a poorer German, and we might think the less of her to-day, had she not striven to advance the cause of her own kith and kin. Her coded wireless messages apart, can the ex-Kaiser's sister possibly deny that she made use of Colonel Falkenhausen's frequent journeyings to German G.H.Q. at Uskub, to acquaint our enemy with details both military, naval and political? I think not. The best submarine bases in the Grecian Isles, General Sarrail's plans, Anglo-French bickering? If Sophie failed in her main object—that of getting the Greek Army in against us for stabbing us in the back at Salonika—it can scarcely have been for want of trying at the time.

I referred to Entente relations. They were "of the most bitter," throughout, in this part of the world. Perhaps things reached their most ludicrous pitch in Athens itself, where the

French chief of espionage, Colonel X., did everything he could to queer our secret service show. And what a show that was! Everybody suspect, from Ministers down. Prostitutes in keen demand. All the foulness and filth of the craft sinister resurrected from where it had lain smothered since the Franco-Prussian days of Stieber. A prominent novelist was in part charge for us some of the time. An imaginative soul. I wonder, was there anything in the story floating round in Intelligence telling how he set out to buy over a batch of girl agents of Schenck's, but how the fair things "did the dirty double on him" by continuing to work for the German all unbeknown to their new master . . . Schenck not only getting to know in this way some of the information we required, but also seeing to it that we got carefully cooked information?

What a game it was, to be sure! With a certain officer specially detailed to rout out maiden purity from Chios and kindred places for the watching of important personages. . . .

But we must pass on. Though not before telling of the journey across Greece to Italy.

This journey was something of an adventure in itself. First one jolted in a train all day to Larissa. Next one crawled up, up, all the day following, in a British motor-lorry — right through Byron-land to a tent-halt not far from Delphi. Ensued next morning a perilous winding descent to the little port of Itea—perilous in that the roads were still being built, and by Greek amazons, controlled by British N.C.O.'s. The local males were too lazy, but their women were fine, carrying on all day for a few pence and a ration of olives, ersatz bread, and the roughest wine. At Itea we boarded a French transport, to be escorted across the very dangerous Straits of Otranto by four Italian T.B.D.'s tugging a brace of sausage balloons high up behind. A fine cortège and one radiating safety.

That night at sea, I recollect, we passed the time holding a mock international court-martial in the saloon. The judges were French, British and Serbian officers, the prisoner's friend, an Irishman—modesty forbids me to give his name—the prosecuting officer, a Russian, and the accused an Italian lieutenant, witnesses being drawn from several of those weird supers of Salonika—including even a Y.M.C.A. worker. The night was a triumph for the Russian prosecutor, who, taking the line that the accused's offence was unmentionable—simply refrained from mentioning it. But the dreadful innuendo that he contrived to keep hovering over the prisoner's head completely won over the Court which found the Italian guilty on all counts and sentenced him to drink a tureen of Turk's blood before dawn or stand the whole company lunch in Rome. (The Turk's Blood, I should mention, was a local variation of that potent beverage "Black Velvet," and consisted of champagne mixed with Greek red wine and Cordial Médoc —incidentally, all that was available on board in the liquid line or anything else would have certainly gone in also.)

At Salonika I received orders to proceed to the new British front that had sprung up following Caporetto, so at once repaired north to report at General Plumer's headquarters at Noventa, behind the Piave, where I was glad to find many old faces from Cassel Hill.

This was the last of the six British G.H.Q.'s in the field to which I was at one time or another attached: French's at St. Omer, Haig's at Montreuil and Beauquesne, Marshall's at Baghdad, Allenby's at Gaza, Milne's at Salonika, and now Noventa. I suppose mine was rather a "G.H.Q.-y" War inasmuch as interspersed with the foregoing were periodic visits down to the French at Chantilly and up to the Belgians at Furnes. Just before the end I was preparing to beget myself, on a very hush-hush mission which can't even at this late day be declared, to "Black Jack" Pershing's G.H.Q. at Chaumont, and did not doubt but that my already liberal headquarters education would have been still further extended. Incidentally, according to rumour, any day thereabouts might have been Pershing's last at Chaumont. Not that the American C.-in-C.'s recall was then imminent, but that he apparently ran some slight risk of being spirited away by a band of German-American Doughboys enlisted as agents of the Fatherland for this and other purposes of a like and sensational nature! Whether the danger of such a coup was real, it is beyond me to say. All I know is that the French were working on such a rumour, fearing, naturally enough, that such German-primed hands, did they exist in the A.E.F., could be turned to graver account, for the Allies, were they directed against Foch. The coup against the Chaumont château (with Boche aeroplane co-operation) was to have been carried out by some half-dozen other ranks, as I heard it, and in the middle of the night. Besides carrying off the General—though whither is not clear—the broad idea was apparently to make hay with all the important files, maps and documents at American Headquarters, thus producing chaos at a critical juncture and when the A.E.F. was already in a pretty good mess after the Argonne. At all events, I give the yarn here for what it is worth—plus the envoi that it came to me from a sober source and that, with luck, realisation of the deed may have been within the bounds of possibility. Without question, some German hearts beating fervently for the Fatherland were to be found in the A.E.F., the further bearing of which in battle, had the campaign lasted, must have been of profound interest to all students of military history in view of the many-origined material under trial. But we were discussing Italy—

I hope the Duce won't take it amiss—he was then, I have since been told, superintending a battalion H.Q. cooker, having earned the reward as a wounded sergeant of Arditi—but frankly, our men liked the Italian War, that is, as much as one can like any war. "The kushi front" they used to call it—and how they used to dread the merest breath of a prospect of their being recalled to Flanders!

Italy has loomed so largely since that anything about its ultimate phase under the old régime may interest. Well, we appreciated to the hilt the dreadful sacrifices Italy made out on the Carso in the two years before we did her a good turn. Almost every shell there, bursting on rock, killed or maimed. But, from the first, we did not much like the bearing of many of the Italian infantry officers. We did not quite see how other ranks could be expected to develop the proper spirit if (to mention the most glaring matter) their officers followed along behind in carts when the battalion was on the march. There were various causes conducive to the demoralisation of Caporetto, but this was surely a palpable one.

There was also, of course, the first manifestation of successful propagandising from the skies, in the way of leaflets roughly announcing:

> "Your wives and children are being murdered at home. Here are the names (ensued a list of civilian casualties in some Turin riots). Why continue to fight on foreign soil when you are being betrayed at home?"

Acting upon war-weariness, it was too much. Before what was intended as a purely local diversion by the brilliant assaulter, von Below, who only had six divisions, the Fourth Corps broke and dissolved, and before nightfall 300,000 Italians from formations all around had laid down their arms—leaving von Below positively bewildered and wiring off madly for reinforcements with which to exploit the miracle.

A contributory cause making for fed-upness in Italy concerned the widespread suspicion of treachery which prevailed. From my frequent chats with the troops, I always carried away the impression that "the good old Macaronis" thought they were being thoroughly betrayed and done down upon high. In a measure, this sprung from the Premier, Giolitti, being known to harbour German sympathies. The political structure was undoubtedly rotten. Yet such war-time fears were invariably vague and uncheckable. When one conversed with deserters from the Hapsburg forces, *they*, in turn, told one that they were quite certain that their Empress, the Italian-born Zita, was giving away all the Austrian war secrets to General Diaz! Poor, misunderstood, proud Zita!

But be all this as it may, on the Italian Front, when we got there, it simply wasn't done to scrap in between battles, and as these occurred, in 1917-18, about twice a year only, we had much time upon our hands in delicious enough surroundings. As an instance, when one of our five divisions took over the Montebelluna sector, it only had sixteen casualties—all wounded—in two whole months (this after Passchendaele!) So can you wonder that our fellows liked it? They liked the wine, the countryside, the climate, the signorinas (who also liked them), the far niente, the glorious old towns behind the lines, the very lingo. Indeed, anybody who says that the British are not natural linguists, lies. Scarce a Tommy but had his dictionary and grammar and instructress by the Piave or behind the Asiago Plateau after a very short while. Learning Italian became de rigeur, the lead in this respect being given by none other than the

Prince of Wales, who was G.S.O.3 on Lord Cavan's Fourteenth Corps. Two visions of H.R.H. at that time come back to me as I write. The first is at H.Q., where I chanced to be in the vicinity one evening when the Prince came back from a necessary but arduous tour in Wales.

" Good Lord!" exclaimed " E.P." (as he was known), throwing himself down in a chair. " Give me a drink! I've been acting for three weeks for the cinema!"

Again, the scene changes to Cova's, Milan's ultra-smart restaurant rendezvous of war-time. A shy, fair, good-looking young captain in khaki and red tabs enters with a friend. He wears only the ribbon of the Military Cross. At once the maitre d'hôtel draws all attention upon the pair by advancing and sweepingly kowtowing and " royal highnessing." With a stamp and a " damn the man," the fair young captain turns on his heel and quits the precincts. He had purposely worn only that M.C. ribbon in order that his presence should pass unnoticed.

I mentioned signorinas. Of all the way round the " Crater," I think the Italian signorinas were the nicest to us. Also, not far short of being the most attractive, with their lively glances and grace of the Middle Sea. Shall I lightly forget " Melma " as one day she appeared to me in the villa I had taken over outside Treviso, having been bombed out of Falzé, next door? Melma (meaning, I believe, mud) was the name, very apt at that period, of the village—that was why I so christened my unexpected visitor. Petite, pretty and dark, and in full mourning, there she suddenly materialised one lunch-time in the doorway as I was tussling with my spaghetti. Nor did she say anything—just stood there, strangely smiling and contemplative. Only after one of those briefest pauses which seemed like whole minutes, did she answer, in response to an obvious question:

"This is my house. I come from Verona to see the English officers who are living in it. Also to learn English."

It was said so simply, so naturally, that no one—least of all a billeted ufficiale inglese behind the Piave—could have taken offence. Indeed, Melma took her first lesson in English without further ado.

As I have said, one of the most attractive features of our Italian campaign concerned the historic towns which lay within easy reach along good, straight roads—arcaded Padua, verdant Verona, gently-lapping Venice. Shall I forget the two temporary gentlemen of Verona I "snapped" one morning gazing up at Dante in his glorious square? Or the hospital and steam-launch silence of the Grand Canal and of the Lido? (The silence of Venice after a bombing raid!) Or illustrious Padua with its unique café where, under a legacy, every poor man receives one drink a day free? Outside Padua, in a detached villa, some of the official correspondents used to live, including Ward Price, Perceval Gibbon and J. M. N. Jeffries, and sometimes they would send a car for me. Yes, the War certainly waxed most romantic for me at Padua, despite its frequent bombings, falling on nights when the arcaded streets were at their loveliest in the moonlight. We had our café, our restaurant, and our villa to go to afterwards, the signorinas were fair to look upon, the Falerno and Barolo of strong warmth. And there was the conversation—the brilliant fireworks of a Gibbon, the unequalled joshing of a Ward Price-in-form, the polished preciosities of Jeffries-with-the-twinkle. One night, I recollect, the infallibility of the Pope came under discussion, as a rest from the more frequently debated fallibility of the Commando Supremo. We were about the fire, Chianti-ing; Gibbon, the nonconformist minister's son, attacking, Jeffries shockedly appearing for the Holy See, Ward Price putting the ball back into the scrum.

And if that kind of thing palled at Padua, one could always slip around the corner to the Correspondents' Mess and encounter such yarners as "Smiler" Hales in a cabaret kind of setting, the walls being covered with cartoons of members and guests.

And there would be "Rome Leave" as the joyous plum crowning our Italian War. It is a mystery to me how we always had so much money in those times, even on pay of two or three hundred a year, yet, somehow, one rarely stayed at anything less than the Grand. This hostelry boasted a famous American Bar at that time, run by one Tammy; famous, among other things, for its total dearth of Americans. Instead, one met the Army and the Navy and spy folk and monied cosmopolitan embusqués trying to "get away with it" in self-designed uniforms having to do with the Levant or Baku or with any place sufficiently off the map so that awkward questioning might be reduced to a minimum. One or two laughable enough incidents hinging on "Tammy's" come back to mind. There was the case of Martin Donohoe, just joined up in the Intelligence Corps and feeling inordinately hush-hush both about himself and his job. After firstly looking round the bar to see that no one was listening, Donohoe cupped his hands to my ear and whispered, with emphasis:

"Not a word! I'm going to Mesopotamia!"

To which one felt impelled to strain hoarsely back, after similarly scanning the company and applying one's hands to one's mouth:

"Not a word! I've just come from there!"

Again, there was the highly delicate case of the Kiss and the Carabinieri. This concerned one of those deep, swaying situations, a cross between a question-mark and the heroine's surrender in the last Act, and which had for its setting the sensuous palm approach to the hotel, and for its principals, a British officer, a charming American lady—and the aforementioned Carabinieri on duty in the palm grove. For public kissing was not then allowed in Italy, and the amorous couple found themselves promptly arrested. Arrested for a kiss in war-time and on leave! Why, the stuttering male culprit positively boiled over at the idiotic Macaronis ("why - in - the - hell - didn't - we - leave - them - to - stew - in - their - own - juice - after-Caporetto?"). The while she who was sustaining the feminine rôle pleaded with alternate tears and cajolery not to be run in . . . what would her Momma say, not to mention her husband? It was, in fact, the ensuing hubbub that brought us out of "Tammy's" hard-by—and just when the situation had reached its clammiest, consequent upon a monetary offer being made by the masculine offender to the stern and stately Carabinieri. However, thanks to distinguished intervention, the case was smoothed over some minutes later—though not without the disgruntled Carabinieri admonishing the Inglesi and Americani to keep their own street morals for their own streets.

I mentioned the Commando Supremo. Then situated at Abano, Italian G.H.Q. was certainly the most delectable of all those I came across in my travels, located as it was far from the War in a delicious setting of orange and olive trees, and all around, the noble Fruilian hills. To me, perhaps the most interesting figure at Abano was that pioneer of aerial propaganda, Mr. Wickham Steed, whose leaflet undermining of the dozen-tongued enemy opposite contributed so powerfully to the latter's final cracking-up. Towards the end special " desertion-posts " were established along the French and British line, their exact position and the procedure to follow when deserting, being advertised copiously and daily from the clouds upon the fast disintegrating foe.

But it is an unhappy commentary that, although we inspired this valuable undermining, General Grossetti's French contingent was the first to take it up and put theory into practice. It was usually like that with us—not only in Italy, but in France and Salonika also.

I should say that we had more ideas, first, than any other of the belligerents, yet we always, somehow, hesitated to put them to the test until others had done so ahead of us. The Tanks constitute the one important exception—but we did even worse with them by prematurely revealing their existence. I do not believe the French have superior military brains to the British. What they possess is a knack of cutting through the cackle and the tape and going clean out after the goods. Time and again I was to run across evidence in the field of such directness of approach on the part of our Allies. Yet even so, the latter were to blunder appallingly in the War, a fact which is apt to be lost sight of through the Foch halo. Joffre's Charleroi début and General Pau's Alsace adventure were equally shocking. Little less so was General Foch's Artois offensive the May following—it is surely not enough to say "attaquez toujours!" *all* the time—not to insist upon Nivelle's crowning piece of folly in April, 1917, which wrecked the morale of the French Army and threw the entire brunt of the campaign on the Western Front on to us for the remainder of that year. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that from the "miracle of the Marne" to the grand offensive of July, 1918, the French Grand Quartier had little to be proud of save Pétain's and Nivelle's defence of Verdun. Because the French have saturated themselves in self-glorification for ten years is no reason why these things should not be said. Some of the worst errors of the War were the result of French insistence, the fact of the fighting being on their territory, giving them an eternal pull. When exported, the French Army, or rather General Staff, lost some of this pull—and that used to annoy it, making it arrogant and contemptuous. Most places they went—Salonika, Italy, Palestine—our Allies were disliked as a result of their Napoleonic complex.

Back in France, the whole face of the War in the West had become transformed. Americans everywhere, Italians in Champagne and British on the Chemin-des-Dames, new names —Foch, Henry Wilson, Weygand, Pershing— on every lip, the Line "fluid" at last; a host of ideas of other days being feverishly attended to; something electrical, final, in the air. I might have been away an age instead of less than a year.

ONE FAMOUS WEEK

ARMISTICE week found me in London. Feeling that soon I should be back at the writing game once more, I thought it would be a good thing to see how rusty three and a half years of the military mind had made me, so picked up a pen and wrote an impression of the rejoicings. Never published at the time, indifferent as it may be, perhaps it gives a truer picture of those mad days than if any re-writing were undertaken now. At any rate, here goes:—

Armistice week in London is destined to be handed down in legendary form as one long-drawn-out period of unprecedented public delirium. The whole town went mad at noon on Monday, November 11th, and to-night, six days later, it is still in a state of unbalanced emotion. The phlegmatic English, after a period of four years of compression, have frankly exploded, and in their joy-making have left every other Allied capital—Rome, Paris and the rest—far behind.

Of the many phenomena associated with what may now be termed the "late war," not the least remarkable has been its one-sided nature in the matter of festive celebrations. Up to the bitter end it was Germany and her satellites which were doing all the shouting and flagwagging and "mafficking." They yelled after the crushing of Russia at Tannenberg and Tarnov; they screamed deliriously at the over-running of Belgium and Serbia and Roumania; out came the bunting again when Italy staggered back all but knocked out at Caporetto. The sea battle of Jutland, the peace of Brest-Litovsk, the Zeppelin raids, the great Kaiser-battle smash through at St. Quentin last March—all these were made the occasion for further rejoicing in the Fatherland.

Meanwhile, for four long years, not an answering cheer arose from the Allies, for the very good reason that they did not win a single resounding victory in that period, and, in fact, seemed to be steadily losing the war.

The swift crumbling of Germany's allies in October left London breathless, but well on her guard against any premature rejoicing. Not a cheer or a flag marked the successive surrenders of Bulgaria, Turkey and Austria-Hungary. England, in her heart of hearts, was silently paraphrasing the Hymn of Hate:—

> "We have one foe, and one alone—Germany!"

Then came the wonderful end!

Such an outburst of spontaneous enthusiasm marked Armistice Day, November 11th, as made up for all Germany's shouting during the war. The joy-making has gone on ever since, day after day, night after night, and to-day, as these lines are being written, six days after the signing of the Armistice, the festive rejoicings have reached their climax. The beflagged and brightly lit streets of London are congested with a dense, cheering crowd, bands are playing, processions forming, all the premonitory symptoms of a final " joy night " on the tapis.

It has been a very wonderful week—a week in which every class of the community has formed up, as it were, in one delirious ring-a-ring-o'-roses. Gorgeously gowned women in silks and satins, have linked up in the street revelry with Australian private soldiers, and stern and bedecorated generals have tripped the light fantastic down Piccadilly arm-in-arm with shell girls and bus conductresses. It has been a veritable apotheosis of democracy.

To understand what has ocurred one must first picture the London war-types who have participated in the revelry—as hectic a pageant of humanity as ever a revue producer could conceive. Stately, khaki-bloused Australians and New Zealanders; land girls in smock, field boots and breeches; convalescent wounded in bright blue uniforms and garish red ties; pretty girl drivers of the Army Service Corps; munitionettes, special constables, naval officers and men of the Grand Fleet; French and Belgian poilus; quaintly capped American seamen; tall, determined " Yanks "; Canadians, cavalry, V.A.D. girls in dark blue or grey; red-tabbed and gold-laced staff officers; tube girls and 'bus conductresses in trim and dainty uniforms; " Waacs " in khaki, some wearing service chevrons and even wound stripes; " Wrens " dressed like naval officers and ratings; " Penguins " and " Wrafs."

One could go on indefinitely, enumerating this amazing London potpourri of the times. No carnival ever equalled it in life or colour.

This past week it has been as if all had crowded on to the stage at the end of the last act and had proceeded to go mad. Dancing, cheering, frolicking, waving flags, letting off fireworks, operating on every manner of instrument from trumpet to squeaker, banging drums, blowing horns and sirens, ringing bells and whirling round nerve-racking rattles—all this in the sober, sedate West End, hour after hour, day after day, night after night.

The ball was started rolling at 11 a.m. on the 11th, when the guns of the anti-aircraft defences thundered the great news east and west, south and north. Instantly London as one man and woman, rose from its desk and proceeded to forget that such a thing as work existed. Out into the streets surged hundreds of thousands. Flags appeared as if by magic on every house and office. People in the street, complete strangers, cheered one another as they made their way towards the West End—for all roads led to the time-honoured celebrating region of Piccadilly, Regent Street and the Strand. Here, towards two o'clock, the scene baffled description. Not an inch of pavement or roadway could be seen. Simply one vast, multi-coloured human throng, all cheering, screaming, yelling. Every motor car, taxi or lorry or 'bus that passed was commandeered by hundreds who clambered up, men, women and children, old and young, and proceeded to set off on a triumphant, cheering joy ride.

One counted as many as twenty on a taxi-cab and thirty on a private car. Girls sat astride the bonnet, others hung perilously on to the mudguards. All cheered and went on cheering. The speed of the " joy chariots " averaged perhaps a quarter-of-a-mile an hour through the continuous sea of humanity. Sometimes an army lorry would come by completely smothered by clinging forms, not even the wheels visible.

In the midst of it all, while the Kaiser was sneaking into Holland, appeared the King and Queen, joy-riding through the dense mass like everyone else. Their Majesties will live to be very old before they ever hear such cheers again as on that Monday afternoon in the Strand.

Every now and then one could distinguish signs of a procession surging through the throng. Such processions were usually headed by an Australian holding up an effigy of the Kaiser, and an American soldier by his side trumpeting "Over There!" Following came thousands arm-in-arm, six or more abreast, Waacs and wounded, land girls and officers, costers and noblemen, East-enders and West-enders, all singing, shouting, skipping, waving flags and blowing carnival "squeakers." Now and then such a procession would break up and burst into wild dancing, fox-trotting down Whitehall in one vast whirlpool, or pirouetting in coster step, hundreds abreast in one long-drawn-out hopping line, up Piccadilly. Such scenes have gone on all the week—a week of smiles, and nothing but smiles. The persons who ventured abroad with a long face was promptly mobbed.

"Is the war over?" shouts a soldier from the plinth of the Nelson Column.

"YES!" roared back ten thousand throats.

"What price Kaiser Bill now?"

And the revellers roar back again something—anything. And the carnival goes on. Star shells and Verey lights, no longed needed "over there," pierce the sky; the searchlights write strange sentences on the clouds, minor bombs explode; we are dazzled by street lamps and theatres and hotels all lighting up once more.

One night a rush was made for the Mall, where 400 German guns were lined up. Dozens were trundled out and through the West End, officers superintending operations from the limbers. In Trafalgar Square a huge bonfire was made of captured guns, hoardings, chairs, anything to hand. And when the fire brigade arrived the Australians calmly cut the hose-pipes and proceeded to dance madly round the flames, mounting fifty feet high. The Australians and American troops and the shell girls have been the moving, careering spirits of the revelry, during which, of course, all traffic has been completely at a standstill.

Pickpockets have had a record week, second only to the hawkers and street vendors selling the flags and favours of all nations and picture postcards of the Kaiser behind prison bars. Paper hats have also had a great vogue—a strange phase of London's delirium, in fact, has been the riot and interchange of headgear. Pretty girls paraded wearing shrapnel helmets and officers countered by donning dainty toques and bonnets. An atmosphere of perfect good-humour has pervaded all; the police having had nothing to do save stand about and receive the plaudits of the multitude. Someone very high up must have said: " Let them carry on. They deserve it!" For all restrictions as known under Dora have been thrown to the winds. People have fairly done things that a week before would have earned them six months' imprisonment.

When the crowd wasn't cheering it was singing. And the din created by tens of thousands singing different tunes in the same street is best left to the imagination. " Après la guerre finie," " Tipperary," " Take Me Back to Blighty," " The Bells Are Ringing," " Good-bye-ee," all being shouted at top-voice. But the most popular have undoubtedly been " Over There " and " Land of Hope and Glory," which has come to be recognised as Britain's second National Anthem.

So much for outside in the streets. We will leave amazing London of a hundred uniforms and types, skipping, hopping and never stopping, dancing, singing, cheering, smiling all the time, sometimes through tears of joy. It has differed radically, this jollification, from all previous " mafficking," in that public drunkenness, owing to the continued, if " easier " drink restrictions, has been the exception, and Jingoism a complete dead letter.

In the hotels and restaurants the scenes have been just as unrestrained. Not a seat has been available the whole week, while the obtaining of food has been a farce. People didn't go to the restaurants to dine this week. They went to revel. The orchestras largely controlled operations. They played every popular tune from the " Marseillaise " to " Auld Lang Syne " over and over again, the diners shouting in chorus at the tops of their voices. Proceedings would be punctuated by cheers for war celebrities such as Wilson, Lloyd George, Foch, Haig and Clemenceau, and by groans and hisses for the Kaiser and the Crown Prince and Ludendorff Or people would make speeches, inarticulate vapourings drowned in applause. A toast to the Czecho-Slovaks would produce a tremendous outburst of enthusiasm, though half the assembly had but the vaguest notion who the Czecho-Slovaks were. Pretty women and gallant officers mounted tables and, standing amid their dinners, waved champagne bottles on high and called for cheers for anybody, anything. And the response would be deafening. To wave a Belgian, or a British or a French or American flag was to bring down the house.

After the hors d'œuvres, dancing usually broke out, and soon the whole room at the Savoy or Romano's or the Carlton would be fox-trotting and prancing up and down, in and out of the tables; no such person as a stranger in the room, all welded together by the wonderful occasion. Men who normally would have been madly jealous of handing their wives over to others, strangers, promptly gripped hold of the stranger's wife. Sedate uncles and aunts donned paper caps and blew tin whistles.

Every now and then the room would resound to the National Anthem and the "Marseillaise," this latter a long way the most popular. Few knew the words, but all shouted the intoxicating air. And meanwhile champagne corks popped, and diners danced with the staff, and more speeches were made, and more cheers for favourites would be called for and thundered forth. Sometimes the guests waited on themselves, going even down to the kitchen. At many restaurants giant "bowls" were made of every conceivable wine and liquor, and ladled around like soup to all and sundry.

Any celebrity of social life, such as a politician or an actress, would be hoisted bodily on to the table and forced to address the room. One attractive young actress astonished people on such an occasion by solemnly declaiming:

> I'm going to give you an entirely new toast. England! We've done more and said less than anybody else!

It has been the same in every hotel and restaurant and café, from Claridge's to the meanest fish shop.

Occasionally rough horseplay intervened—as at one big hotel whose closed entrance was burst through with German guns used as battering rams—but the general rule has been just boisterous, good-tempered hilarity.

After dinner fashionable parties repaired to dances held into the small hours in every corner of the town; others, not so particular, joined in at the nearest "hop" going on at the corner of the street to the strains of a solitary cornet.

In the theatres it has been the same. No one went to see the show, but just to cheer, dance and sing, and at many of the music-halls the artists gave it up after the opening few minutes and mingled with the audience, who, in turn proceeded to mount the stage and prance about, with the chorus.

In the middle of such a scene the King arrived at the Alhambra—he has been deliberately going everywhere into the heat of the revel.

Such has been Armistice Week in London—

a week that will stand out for ever for those who lived it. The nightmare of slaughter and agony suddenly wafted away as if by magic, the town has frankly gone quite mad. It has been an unexampled blending of the masses with the classes.

Take a last couple of snapshots—a Peer and a Colonel, a land-girl and a white-capped American seaman, prancing round a policeman in Piccadilly Circus.

Again, the spectacle of a dozen one-legged men clambering on to a commandeered milk-cart and waving their crutches all the way down the Strand.

Such scenes have littered the town—a hoarse, tired town to-night after a whole week's amazing jollification, but still carrying on at the same pressure as last Monday.

People are asking: "When is it going to end?"

THE DAY

It was on the morning of November 19th, 1918, that I saw the Grand Fleet for the first time, riding at anchor in the Firth of Forth, preparatory to executing certain police duty of historic importance. There it was, then! One monster grey line serpentining out of sight. The famous hush-hush fleet of Scapa, whose doings had for so long been wrapped in secrecy and mystery!

In memory I travelled back four winters, and was again out in the Channel and North Sea drifting about in the little *Grace Darling*, hoping to see this fleet go into action off the Belgian coast. Actually, we had intended cruising up and down between Dunkirk and Ostend, but first our donkey-engine, next our rudder, and finally our crew of four Flems going back upon us, things never developed according to plan. As we set sail from Dover one dirty evening on that painful voyage, I see again our skipper, a young lady, in sou'wester, sea-boots and oilskins, leisurely smoking while shouting orders and steering the vessel. Being on a rare job of work I kept a diary. Funny reading to-day, some of it:—

October 29.—Twinkling in the distance, as they have twinkled welcome to millions of cross-channel passengers, are the lights of Calais. Will it be found written on the Kaiser's heart, too? One's reverie is interrupted by searchlights suddenly playing upon us. A destroyer sidles up. "Who are you?" *Grace Darling* for Dunkirk with Red Cross stores." "Right-ho! Go carefully, though. Lots of French about." So off we tack again through the breeze, the night overcast save for stars winking merrily towards Ostend. An illusion. It is the fleet "talking" in the bombardment area.

October 30th.—The donkey-engine broke down at 9 a.m. and there is no one on board who understands the slightest thing about it. The Flemish engine-man who signed on at Dover now admits he is a butcher, knows nothing of mechanics, and merely wishes to get back to Dunkirk and thence to Courtrai. It was he of course who broke it.

So we must depend on our canvas, all giving a hand. The sea is now more than nasty, and a cold mist has settled down. Griz Nez seems absurdly near, but it is fifteen miles away. We turned in to the tune of a gramophone clearly audible from the deck of a stationary T.B.D. We shall wake up off Dunkirk—perhaps.

October 31st.—We are further from the coast than we were last night. The breeze has veered right round, and the crew has gone on strike. "They're dangerous ruffians," says our skipper, "so I've locked them up for'ard and am chucking their rations over at them. I've been up all night. A French destroyer, silly fools, made us stand by for three hours while they got a reply about us from Dover."

All day long we slaved mainfully, vice the crew, and oh, the soreness of one's hands! A nautical lecture over lunch (we are now on biscuits, salt junk, and a tot of rum). "I can carry on for days on water and cigarettes," says Miss B.

A submarine has just come up and told us many are dead in the *Falcon*, whose commander had attempted to emulate the *Badger's* ramming feat. We shout what news we have, "They're no nearer Calais." "Yuss, we knows all abaht that, mate," shouts back an A.B. peering up out of the conning tower, "but what won the Cambridgeshire? That's what we want to know, me an' my mates."

There is now very great motion on the vessel and it is pouring rain. We sat for an hour huddled up on deck, singing choruses.

> November 1st.—The crew are now at their posts again, having seen Dunkirk only a few miles off. We are wandering aimlessly about in the long channel of red buoys leading up to port. A big cruiser is signalling to us. No one can read her. A launch puts off and I megaphone who we are. It is the *Brilliant*, badly battered all down one side. She is suspicious. We are to proceed at once to Dunkirk under observation.

Well, and so it goes on. We never saw any naval action or landing—the plan to land further divisions in this part in support of Rawlinson's isolated Seventh Division having been abandoned on account of the seriousness of the situation at Ypres—but now, four years later, here at last was the elusive Grand Fleet, all shining and polished and about to proceed to sea.

The curtain really rose on this final act of sea war towards the end of October, when Admiral Beatty, in *Queen Elizabeth* (alias, "Big Lizzie" or "Q.E.") assembled his ship's company aft. (I relate a U. S. version.)

"Men," he announced, in that abrupt, incisive way of his, "they're coming out at last. I always said they would. No staleness! Do your jobs, each one of you!"

Some days later the C.-in-C. repeated this summons and advice almost word for word. (Had there been slackness or unrest following rumours of German naval Bolshevism, that he should have taken the pains?) On November 11th, as soon as he had had word from Admiral Weymss, at Réthondes, that all the naval clauses had been accepted and signed, Beatty called his flagship to attention for a third time.

"Men," he shot out, "I've always told you they'd come out. But I didn't think they'd come out on a piece of string!"

And abruptly Beatty regained his cabin, features drawn in disgust and bitter disappointment. After four years of desperately boring and demoralising waiting, an organised regatta was to be the end! Unbelievable! (As we know now, Admiral Sheer did try to get his crews out two weeks before the end, and following Ludendorff's exit on October 26th. But the seed of Bolshevism was by then flourishing. What is not so well known is that this seed was mainly nurtured if not sown by our Intelligence Division spreading the information across the North Sea that Bolshevism had broken out *in the Grand Fleet.* "They mutinied," as a German captain was later to explain through sobs in Largo Bay, "because they heard your Grand Fleet was going in for Bolshevism, too!")

Twenty-four hours after the "piece of string" episode, Admiral von Meurer arrived in the *Koenigsberg* to arrange the carrying out of the Armistice terms. At the cabin conference that ensued in "Q.E.", an icy courtesy, a granite firmness, incredulity at that which was transpiring, were manifest. There had never been any naval surrender in history like this. Spaniards, French, Russians—all had come out in similar circumstances of certain doom and fought their ships. "We felt as if our profession were being held up and compromised," explained one who was present, some days later.

As for Beatty, stern, biting his words, he refused to listen to von Meurer's broken English, turning ever and anon to his interpreter with a "What does the Admiral say?" Once, when von Meurer broke out: "Admiral, we verr driven to this. We verr coming out two weeks ago. The men refused. You must know that there is no child life left in Germany under five years of age. They are all dying!" the British Admiral testily threatened to terminate the proceedings the next time his visitor departed from the strict book of words. Whereupon von Meurer, this time via the interpreter, went on: "Well, we are anxious to get these ships over here at the earliest possible moment

(Beatty's eyes open in unbelief), and we want you to take full crews in them, not reduced personnel as stipulated. The Navy breeds the worst Bolshevists, and we haven't enough food for them if we take them back home. Keep them here!"

Admiral Beatty: "Tell the Admiral that we shall abide strictly by the Armistice terms."

Nothing daunted, the unfortunate von Meurer next produced a document in German capitals, and drawn up by the Kiel Naval Soviet of Workmen and Sailors. This read:—

> I, the undersigned, guarantee that all German crews, either of submarine or surface craft, proceeding to England for internment, will be immune from all ill-treatment.

At the bottom a space had been left for Beatty to sign. Instead, the C.-in-C. took the document, tore it in half, threw it on the floor, and rapped out: "Tell him they're coming to England. That's all there is to it!"

Many days before it left Kiel and Cuxhaven on its final funereal voyage, which was to take nearly three days, the command of the High Sea Fleet had to all intents and purposes been taken over by Admiral Beatty. By wireless he ordered the Germans left and right. Subsequently I was to spend a most interesting afternoon afloat studying that wireless. Of all the humiliations it contained, perhaps foremost was that connected with a certain minefield. Periodically the Germans would wireless for guidance and be put on a clear course. Once, however, when they were two hours late at a rendezvous (similar rendezvous spots had been designated the whole way over), Beatty enquired why.

> We are sailing round one of our own minefields (here followed a chart reference).

wirelessed back the surrendering C.-in-C., Admiral von Reuter.

"That's all right," signalled the British C.-in-C., "We swept that field up long ago."

Privileged guests were allotted, for the actual taking over of the enemy's fleet out at sea, at the rate of two per capital ship, my vessel being the U.S. battleship *Texas*, Captain Victor Blue, which I boarded on the evening of November 19th. Five U.S. battleships—*New York*, *Texas*, *Arkansas*, *Wyoming*, *Florida*—formed the 6th B.S. of the Grand Fleet under Rear-Admiral Rodman, and now they lay, with their distinctive lattice masts, almost under the great Firth of Forth bridge, a certain liveliness manifest all about them. Which reminds me of a laughable enough incident marking my arrival alongside *Texas* in a pinnace.

In Edinburgh I had been warned that all U.S. ships were even then "dry," that the North Sea could be deuced raw of a Scottish November day, and that therefore—well, I had better take something along with me. This "something" I ultimately managed to wheedle from the maitre d'hôtel at the Caledonian, almost by genuflecting before him (recollect the sway of Dora!) and now I was gaily mounting the accommodation ladder of the *Texas*, my "something" carefully stowed away inside my haversack, when crash! went the haversack against the side of the ship in a sudden lurch, and with what result it pains me even now to relate. At any rate, a few seconds later I saluted the quarterdeck dripping with that "something" of the country—a form of arrival which did not, however, appear to perturb the receiving executive officer in the least.

Possibly he thought that was how British Army officers usually arrived for surrenders of fleets, for all he said was: "You have the Admiral's cabin as we don't run to such human luxuries. Make yourself comfy and then come right along to the wardroom. We're having a sort of a hop!" And I found myself handed over to a couple of Filippino boys, one of whom

I later came across determinedly wringing out the contents of my haversack into a basin, with what intent can only be conjectured.

. . . And so we "shook a leg" for the balance of the evening in *Texas*, the while the enemy, in mournful armada strung out over fully twenty miles, found his way towards us and Nemesis, most of the officers under lock and key and white-armleted Soviet sailors in command. Personally, of the fifty odd hours afloat allotted me, I furiously lived each minute, so spurred would be the landlubber's imagination. One kept putting oneself in the shoes of those oncoming seventeen thousand. The chosen core of the Hoch See Flotte, of that flamboyantly-vaunted fleet which William II had not ceased flaunting in our faces for over twenty years.

Our future lies on the water.

Well, here it was—an incredible, baffling grande finale to the greatest piece of sea swagger in naval annals.

Then again, one kept repeating (sotto voce) "Der Tag!"

The Day! When England should go down! Well, here that day was, too.

Verily, what could those representatives of the German naval name be saying, doing, thinking, feeling, out in the chill North Sea that night as we toasted " Der Tag " in the wardroom (unhappily in iced water) and afterwards nonchalantly—as had it all been on manœuvres—filed in to see the latest Hollywood offering of that primitive day? We knew later that the enemy ratings were drinking, cursing, spitting, singing, and seeing to it that none of their officers got near the seacocks, but we had no inkling, at the time, of the defeated foe's parallel reaction to events.

I do not know if the Navy was too bored or stale to " sit up and take notice " of the historic occasion—the U.S. contingent certainly should not have been, after but ten months co-operation—but it was next to impossible to make my companions and hosts thrill to events. Time after time, I fear, I broke the rigid rule barring all " shop " from the wardroom, only to draw a blank.

On the morning of the 20th, after a delicious hammock night and an American breakfast that included waffles, silence and iced water, I was a guest in the U.S. flagship *New York* on the occasion of a visit from the King, the Prince of Wales, and Admirals Beatty and Sims. After the merriest of luncheons—one could not fail to hear it—Rear-Admiral Rodman showed his

Majesty the Royal Ensign flying for the first time in history above the Stars and Stripes.

It was a moving scene—which some of us may do well to recall these days—when later the U.S. Marine Band aft struck up the British National Anthem, all standing to attention. Also when an American officer megaphoned from the bridge, " Three cheers for the King of England!"

How they were given—those cheers. *And how!*

At dusk, and as we still rode at anchor, the gathering darkness all around twinkling with lights and flashes, Operation Order ZZ was circulated. The last. The end. Double Z! (Prior to it, Admiral Beatty signalled a more personal message, but this is no longer the period to harp upon that side.)

Laconically, and in stiff, formal wording, Operation Order ZZ told us of the morrow's consummation and went on to indicate how the enemy would be escorted in, held to the strictest of navigation programmes obviating all risk to the Grand Fleet.

" They could do a lot of harm if they chose," explained Captain Blue that night over dinner in his cabin. " They could easily get one or two of ours before being dealt with. It's just possible a submarine manned only by officers may put in a surprise appearance and get busy. Any division so attacked will scatter, the rest of the line continuing ahead."

Shall I lightly forget that tête-à-tête with this charming American sailor? Perhaps it was because both of us felt able to talk freely for the first time, perhaps it was the very drama in the air exercising its subtle effect, but anyhow it was the most interesting night I ever spent all round the "Crater." Everything brand-new to me, I listened spellbound to tales of "Q" ships and piracy, of the grim and thankless life of the Fleet, of naval wireless and other wonders. And in turn, yarned tales of land "Intelligence." Nor were we "dry" that famous night—not a little bit. The only fly in the ointment would be the frequent interruptions—though, upon second thoughts, what unique interruptions those would be:

> "One of our patrol boats has picked them up a hundred and fifty miles east of May Island,"

would announce an officer from the bridge. And for a while, however gripping the conversation, one's thoughts would go straying again . . .

So broke "Der Tag"—a maritime day of Trafalgar-like consequences, but chiefly memorable for its bloodlessness. Beatty saw that it was quite a big parade. We were about four to one in ships, and six to one in personnel.

But of that "Day" I have told elsewhere. How all night we passed out to sea, how the Americans stood to "General Quarters" from dawn onwards (a Scotch mist dawn, a favourite with U-boats), how the Germans, after being picked up some two hours later, behaved like lambs all the way back to Largo Bay—a bitter touch of irony being given to their surrender by the presence of cinema operators on the vessel which first came up with them off May Island, the light cruiser *Cardiff*, from whose stern, moreover, rose a sausage directly poised above the head of the late enemy's line, the *Seydlitz*, lest Fritz should try any tricks. It was really more like the last sea voyage of an exalted personage than anything else, something of an anti-climax which, so far as I can recall to-day, yielded but a solitary thrill. That was when the Grand Fleet divided into two columns, and wheeling about, prepared to lead home the Germans (in the middle). It was during this turning move that the British Navy excelled. Ahead of us was the 5th B.S.—*Malaya*, *Barham*, &c.—and their evolutions simply brought the Americans to an awe-struck standstill on deck.

"Guess we aren't up to that just yet!" was how Captain Blue put it.

We brought in *Bayern*, *Grosser Kurfurst*, *Kronprinz Wilhelm* and *Markgraf* and though I swept the decks of these vessels continuously with my field-glasses during the four score miles back to port, I did not see more than a dozen Germans on deck throughout.

Black night had descended by the time we were all cheering Beatty as he passed us in review in the Firth of Forth; by the time national anthems were crashing forth in every ship prior to the holding of religious services for this perhaps strangest victory in naval annals. By that time the High Sea Fleet was an abject affair, its Imperial ensigns all struck by Beatty's stern order. However, those ensigns were to be hoisted once again, and without Beatty's permission.

I refer to the Scapa scuttlings of June 19th, following, when many German warships sank beneath the waves (by kind permission) with their colours flying.

A COMPANY OF LEGEND

From the focus-point of ten years after, still far from perfect yet beginning to permit of some form of enduring assessment, I look back on the " Crater " and reflect inter alia that here was occasion, unique and unreturning, for men —and women—to soar above their fellows. Scores of millions of us may have crowded on to the stage to play our puny, miniscule, invisible rôles, to strut and die, revel and suffer, give or gain, yet of these entire races to be called . . . who were they, who were the actors fated to be chosen as lastingly outstanding in this mightiest of recorded human dramas?

Outstanding: not necessarily greatest, noblest, most belaurelled, but the ones likely to stand out most prominently in the years to come; those one will associate with the great upheaval of the early twentieth century almost without mental process—as Nelson or Napoleon are merged in their epoch. In the days of Armistice, I recollect toying with this idea—of selecting the twelve most arresting figures of the preceding four years—and who do you imagine were among those included? Venizelos, Allenby, Nicolai Nicolaievitch, Colonel House, Lord Northcliffe . . . five of our dozen straightaway open to serious challenge ten years later. In point of fact, certain lights and luminaries that once dazzled in the firmament have been lowered considerably since, if not indeed put out entirely; while other figures who had pegged away in relative obscurity have captured the limelight, chiefly as the result of being strikingly presented in authoritative memoirs.

Heretofore the whole thing was such a jumble; we were so close to the film, that the drawing-up of any list likely to last was more or less of an impossibility. Even to-day it is a distinctly more tricky business than appears on the surface. An immense amount of looking around one's subject is necessary, likewise a distinct aptitude for getting into other people's shoes. Apart from the standard of unexampled exclusiveness that one sets in choosing a dozen human beings from a drama in which participated so many millions, how easy it is to lose correct international perspective and select half-a-dozen of one's own people just because these stood out so much more vividly to *you*. For example, if one asked a Frenchman for his list, it is ten to one he would rattle off Foch, Clemenceau, Pétain, Guynemer, Driant, Citroën, Galliéni, Joffre, Viviani, Painlevé, Briand, Nivelle, Tardieu, Albert-Thomas, Loucheur, de

Castlenau, Weygand, Buat, Gouraud, Lyautey, Maunoury, Franchet d'Esperey, Millerand, even poor kept-in-the-Elysée Raymond Poincaré himself . . . not to mention Caillaux and Sarrail and Almeyreda and Bolo Pasha. Two dozen names right off, and what is more, our Gallic friend would wax exceeding eloquent as to why not one could be left out. The same with the U.S.A. Where could one find room even for a representative minimum of the galaxy that would be broadcast across the ocean to us . . . Woodrow Wilson, Tasker Bliss, Pershing, Leonard Wood, Bernard Baruch, Henry Ford, J. P. Morgan, Ambassadors Gerard and Page, Lansing, McCadoo, Herbert Hoover, Sims, Rodman, Alan Seeger, Lufberry, Newton Baker, Senator Lodge, Henry White, Colonel House, Brand Whitlock, Hunter Liggett . . . why, with the half of such names the majority on this side of the Atlantic would be on but the dimmest terms of recognition, if so at all. And vice versa, with *our* stupendous list, on such being set before American (or French) eyes.

Here are two further difficulties that have to be surmounted: the temptation to draw up a picturesque list; and the danger of unconsciously being influenced by what War characters may, or may not, have done *since* 1918. As an example of the first, it would be quite bold and interesting to prepare and develop such a list as the following:—

Nurse Cavell.
Feisal.
Mata Hari.
Lawrence.
von Kluck.
Rasputin.
"C" of the Admiralty.
Lieut. Warneford.
Campbell of "Q" ships.
Otto Weddekin.
Mathy of the "Zeps."
Swinton of the Tanks.

All these were outstanding without question—indeed I am not sure if at least four should not go into our final list—yet, given that we are engaged upon a serious enquiry, where are you going to find room for Foch, Lenin, Lloyd George, Hindenburg, Ludendorff, and for half-a-dozen almost equally insistent cases besides? Twelve is such a terribly small number!

A further pitfall hinges on our having come to know, in the years since 1918, much more about this and that figure's share and rôle in the conflict. Naturally it is this more lasting rise of others, in the light of slow-moving revelation, which knocks out several of those one was apt to choose directly after Armistice, yet there is danger here, as I have said, of being influenced in one's reconsidered selection by the fact that such and such a person may have greatly consolidated his reputation *since* the War; and this danger obviously carries with it the inclination to overlook others, either because they are dead or because they passed from the scene directly or shortly after the curtain descended on the battlefields. Perhaps it would be hard to find a better example of how the long-distance viewpoint may be at fault, beside the original " close-up " selection, than by advancing the cases of King Albert of Belgium and King Feisal of Iraq. Albert may be said to have passed from the limelight with his re-entry into his capital, at which epoch the world at large knew literally nothing of Feisal. Yet it has learnt since, through the records of Lawrence and Gertrude Bell, to recognize Feisal as a right royal romantic of those times, as the only man who gained a kingdom when everybody was losing them, as a desert fighter and constructive force of high quality. Yes, one would love to include Feisal in our illustrious dozen—but can one? Can one exclude—for it would come perforce to that—the most purely heroic figure of the War, for one does not see that time has relieved King Albert of that distinction? Where the Kaiser was fated to drag " the King idea " through the mire, King Albert lifted it perhaps as high as any sovereign has done in history. A King driven from his country by wanton force of arms is always a subject for human sympathy. King Albert, by his noble, modest, and sincere bearing through more than four years, called forth, in addition, the unstinted admiration of friend and foe alike. From the day he refused to lift the latch to Kaiserism at Liége, preferring to suffer with his whole country, to the hour he rode once more, a victor, into his beloved Brussels, King Albert carried on steadfastly, devotedly, sharing not a few of the actual hardships of a soldier's life. When he might have been driving in gala state through the capitals of Europe —such invitations were issued to him—he preferred the seclusion of a little villa situated in the last strip of unoccupied Belgium, at La Panne. Here with his consort, he spent month after month, year after year, exhorting his troops to further efforts in the abject, muddy misery of the Yser, himself often fearful lest such efforts should be of no final avail. At times he would walk out alone on the sands, the outcast King, and gaze long and sadly at the lights of Ostend—his Ostend—ten miles away.

Half-a-dozen times at least King Albert was approached by Germany with a view to his making a separate peace. There were times when the Allied efforts to regain Belgium seemed hopeless, when these separate peace offers might have won over a less steadfast soul. To them all, King Albert turned a proud, deaf ear, preferring defeat to dishonour. Had he succumbed to the voice of the tempter it is difficult to see how France or England could have carried on as they did. So much of the moral factor was involved with Belgium. King Albert knew that perfectly well.

A famous cartoon, in August, 1914, depicted the Kaiser standing sword in hand amid the ruins of Belgium and saying to King Albert:

"Well! You see what you've brought upon yourself! You've lost everything!"

"Except my soul!" replies the taunted one.

He lost nothing. He went back to a far richer inheritance than he ever left. Far too few men of Albert of Belgium's stamp come to the surface on thrones.

And yet—so tiny is this list—it is impossible to include two candidates from Belgium and it is impossible to include King Albert because it is impossible to exclude Cardinal Mercier, the greatest spiritual force of the War.

"A hero," it has been written, "a historic figure in the true sense of the term, is a man who arises during some crisis in the history of the world to arrest or turn aside by a striking and possibly unconscious attitude the course of events. Such a man was this priest defying an army."

If one can apply the over-worked word "superman" to any individual prominent during 1914-18, Cardinal Mercier was probably that man as much as and more than any other. Apart from his urgently practical side in protecting his flock in the material sense from German depredations, he possessed a character of unapproached serenity. None, so it is averred, could come near him without feeling in the presence of somebody different. The Archbishop of Malines' prestige governed everything and everybody—even von Bissing. Yes, that was it about Cardinal Mercier—prestige, first, last and all the time. The most precarious pinnacle of all, if not to attain, at least to maintain. The Cardinal maintained it by remaining perfectly constant throughout, never wavering for an instant. His views, through his famous Pastorals, were fully known to all. The population should refrain from acts of hostility and respect the laws in force but " the sole legitimate authority in Belgium is that belonging to our King." Incidentally, the Pastorals, read over again, constitute gems of erudite daring and joshing—there is no other word—of his dull-witted semi-gaolers. These same Pastorals also went to form the charter of liberty for the occupied regions. Without them, Belgium must have disintegrated; the one beacon beckoning on the Allies must have gone out.

The day Baron van der Laencken, the German political chief, left Brussels for good, he wrote to Cardinal Mercier: " You are to us the incarnation of Occupied Belgium." As Belgium was the incarnation of Allied resistance when things were darkest, how to omit the Cardinal from this list? I include him.

. . . In this assessment, with which no two people will find themselves in agreement, I suppose one's surest path is to proceed by countries and by gradual elimination.

With surprising ease it becomes possible to rule out country after country as having produced nobody at all. None of the neutrals, save the United States when neutral, and Holland, produced anybody of enduring renown or notoriety. In Spain, alone the King, for his care of prisoners, cut a certain figure; in all Scandinavia, only Branting, the Swedish Socialist Premier, with his " war a draw " project; in Switzerland, not a soul; nor anybody, worthy of first honours, in all South America put together. Even certain of the belligerents were singularly remiss in providing lasting human material. Who stands out to-day from the late Empire of Austria-Hungary. Count Tizsa? The C.-in-C., von Hoetzendorf? The old Emperor Franz-Joseph? Not one of them —even a German, von Below, won Caporetto!

The only figure that returns to-day is the hapless Karl—and one really cannot tarry over such a weak, albeit sympathy-arousing character as he—or for that matter, over his equally pathetic Zita. Mention of whom suggests a striking fact about this inquiry—the difficulty of recovering women from the war years worthy of comparison in " outstandingness " with even the lesser of men candidates. No Joan. No Florence. True, noble Red Cross and Auxiliary work was done, and there were excellent Dames this and that, yet try as I may I can only summon up a lean half-dozen women of 1914-18 who loomed sufficiently to merit mention here. Three sat on thrones. There was the afore-mentioned Zita who, via her brothers of Parma and of the Belgian Army, sought sincerely to curb the slaughter in early 1917 by working a drawn peace through M. Poincaré. There was Queen Sophie, who must have done as much as any other agency to sustain her Imperial brother's prestige in the Balkans. There was the Czarina, who with her monkish propensities, speeded the already-scheduled débâcle of her adopted country. There was Gertrude Bell, who freakishly contributed to the conjuring up of the Kingdom of Iraq. And there were two others—

Nurse Cavell and Mata Hari.

I propose including both in this attenuated list, the only women in the company of ten men.

I am not doing this just because they are women and "women are always news." I believe these two War figures, the "good" and the "bad," will survive as symbols long after many a famous general or politician of those years is forgotten. Each was utterly arresting; about each, legend is growing. The Nurse and the Spy stand out more vividly to-day than at the time they played their parts. All Miss Cavell may have done was to aid in the succouring of 200 soldiers and to die with "patriotism is not enough" on her lips, yet she lives forever, internationally, on the strength of war service, and therefore fulfills the utmost meaning of the term "outstanding." All the world accepts her as *the* woman of the War.

Much of a similar cosmopolitan and permanent niche seems to be reserved for Gertruida Macleod, one-time lanky flapper of Leeuwarden. Mata embodied a definite side of the conflict. She may not have been beautiful, may not even have been a good spy, none the less she is known on all sides, instantly, to-day—and that is the test one must go by, here. (It is a pity, in passing, that stories which purport to be about her do not stick more closely to the facts. Mata's experiences were quite dramatic enough without the need of any embellishment).

. . . Proceeding on our way, like Austria, Turkey produced no world-character of consequence as we see things to-day. Enver, after his Armenian conquests, vanished. The real leaders were von der Goltz, in Baghdad, Liman von Sanders in Constantinople, and Kress von Kressenstein on the Peninsula. True, a certain Mustapha Kemal was chiefly responsible for our Suvla undoing, but he was only a Corps Commander, which he remained to the end, his dawn of greatness being essentially a post-war affair. Nor was there anybody outstanding in Bulgaria (save Foxie Ferdie) or in Serbia (save Pashitch and brave old King Peter) or in Roumania. Italy and Greece, however, give us to pause. In the former there was the subsequently reinstated Cadorna; there was Diaz; there was Marconi, ever perfecting; there was Sonnino, who just missed being a big Foreign Minister; there was Orlando who "walked out on" the Big Four in Paris. And there was D'Annunzio. As the bringer-in of Italy against her former Allies; as the recognised inspirer of Fascismo when the Duce was still a sergeant of Arditi; and later as the very-much-on-earth acquirer of Fiume, this long-fingered poet-bomber and utter human contradiction cannot be barred from the ultimate dozen. Outstanding he was, in the highest degree, and so he remains.

In Greece, besides Tino, Venizelos was a memorable figure credited with having every second Allied statesman of eminence at one time or another " in his pocket." (Mr. Lloyd George seems seldom to have been out of this appendage —save, perhaps, when he was in Sir Basil Zaharoff's.) By all accounts Venizelos charmed everybody with his force and personality, with his persuasive eloquence. He rose to noble heights, too—as when he abandoned Athens and set up an opposition régime with two hundred followers on Crete. He was sustaining to the Allies when the latter were down in the dumps and he finally helped by getting four Greek divisions into uniform if not into the firing line. But for my part I have always thought Venizelos an over-rated celebrity, even though he be back at the helm again to-day. May it not have been by his very cleverness that so much was lost to Greece, that such prolonged unrest ruled there, that so much dissension was sown among others? Didn't this man's personal position derive mainly from the fact of his country having been all through so valuable and venal a pawn? One does not wish to be ungrateful to one who was a friend in need, but I doubt if Venizelos occupies anything like the position to-day, in trained estimation, that he enjoyed during Versailles. Indeed, many would probably list President Masaryk, creator of the Czech Republic, considerably above the Cretan.

Before leaving this part of the world and facing sterner stuff in the north, it may be well to cast round the East, generally, for likely candidates. In Egypt, Zaglul was commencing his games. In India, Gandhi was developing Swaraj. Nearer home there were: Maude of Baghdad, Allenby of Jerusalem, Lawrence of Arabia. More than one authority has expressed the opinion that General Maude was as brilliant a soldier as we produced in the whole War. Yet what would a Frenchman or an American say if Maude were included in our list? He would simply smile. With Allenby, perhaps our friends wouldn't, for there was something Crusader-like, intensely spectacular about this officer's over-running of the Holy Land—one mad gallop. Yet alas—consider the other naval, military and aerial leaders of the Empire we still have to pass in review . . . and there may not be room even for one! Allenby: very nearly. Comes Lawrence. Brilliant, beautiful, an outstanding genius on his cabbage patch, the hero of boys for ever, and of grown-ups, too. Never mind if there be two opinions about the magnitude of his work. Lawrence was outstanding like very few and so enters our elect. Now East, now West . . .

Five nations remain—the U.S.A., Russia, Germany, France and Britain.

The U.S. full-dress list I elaborated at the outset: what name, or names, can we lift from it? Probables seem to narrow down to Wilson, Pershing, House, Gerard, Hoover and Page. Wilson, of course, is chosen—whatever the pitiful dénouement, the leading of his own people against him by Senator Lodge, he did stand out and like few others, perhaps, since Bonaparte. There were six months in 1918 when the White House, with Wilson in possession, came to be looked upon as Delphi itself: ally and enemy alike stood in awe of this obscure professor as he appeared to ladle out the wisdom of the ages . . . as the very shorthand clerks seemed to be taking down history when he deigned to speak. Like Cæsar, Wilson later rode through the capitals of the Old World, preparing the way for his Fourteen Points—"several more than God required," vide Monsieur Clemenceau. Nor does knowledge of all this President's shortcomings, as since so adequately made known to us by his alleged friends, shift him from his pinnacle of boggled effort to-day.

But when it comes to finding a second, much less a third place in our list for Americans, it is another story. Pershing commanded actively for the last six months, his force reaching 22 divisions in line right at the end. That he would not have continued to command much longer, had the conflict continued, is not so widely known. Yet that is so—the Argonne mess of October, 1918, costing nearly 20,000 dead where 2,000 might have sufficed, was a bad smudge. As for Hoover's admirable relief work in Belgium and elsewhere, Gerard's claim to have manœuvred the rupture with Germany, and Page's noble work in keeping America and Britain together, the list of the Twelve is too exclusive to permit of their admittance, although Hoover, as the feeder of war victims on gargantuan lines, hovers very near the door: certainly millions have reason to remember him as none other. With House, the position is difficult. His "Intimate Papers" stamp him permanently in the thick of the War epoch. Some may have called him at the time a circulating busybody, others again, to-day, may not be at all attracted by the "I did everything" tone he appears to assume so subtly against the Chief-Who-Lasted-Eighteen-Months, yet one has only to read document after document to be compelled to acknowledge that here was a man—an unknown "Colonel" from Texas—who was the supreme wangler of his time . . . and how things used to be done by wangling in those days! Only, House wasn't wangling serjeant-majors but chiefs of state. After 1917, if England or France wanted a pound of cheese, they seem to have gone to him. But there is a fly in the ointment. We do not know precisely how much Wilson relied on House. We have only the latter's testimony, and it has been contradicted. One cannot therefore see one's way to including both Wilson *and* his alleged Second Self. One or the other must go; the pair run too much of a three-legged race. So exit the gallant "Colonel." And for this reason also: that, indifferent commander as he may have been, "Black Jack" Pershing was a tremendous symbol in his day and where he cannot enter, assuredly none other among the Americans may.

We pass to Russia—

The War started with one Russian dominating everything (in that country) and it ended with a second Russian doing no less. Nicolai Nicolaievitch and Lenin. There were others in between—the Little Father himself, revealed by his letters as a well-intentioned believer in most things told him, Broussilov of the last great Eastern offensive and later of the Red Army, Kerensky who had it all pat in words but became pusillanimously paralytic in action, Miliukoff and Prince Lvoff of the last effort at Western Government. It may well be agreed, however, that, looking back to-day, the only two others comparable with the Grand Duke and Lenin are Trotsky and Rasputin. Of Trotsky's enduring niche, firstly as the practical realiser of so many of Lenin's visions, subsequently as leader and organiser of the Red Army, and later still as the hounded-forth bête noir of Stalin, there is not a shadow of doubt. Yet here again, as with Wilson-House, one cannot help thinking that Bronstein is too closely merged in Vladamir Ilyitch for both to survive in the Twelve. Had there been no Lenin it would have been different. Ah, but then, other things, too, might have been different—without the Mirabeau touch of culture supplied by Lenin, the Jew must have made small headway on his own.

Of course, the founder of Bolshevism goes into our list—possibly at the top. A sinister figure? A man of blood? Mais oui. Yet this is no chronicle of spotless virtue—many of the most outstanding men in history have been of the deepest dye. Vitalising a new world force (I was going to write "horror" but so many people appear to be beginning to forget that part, even as the tumbrils have long ceased to make the blood boil), Lenin profoundly influenced the course of the War (and of the "Peace"). A creator, a leader, a whipper-in of brutish illiterates. I like to retain three vignettes of him (and not one of them at the Rotonde!). The first is Zurich in 1915, practically centimeless, an outcast, with precisely thirty followers. Yet when the others have pawned their pawnable apparel for nourishment, Lenin limits the latter to the meagrest ration rather than sacrifice his one passable overcoat which is his open sesame to the library. The others, too shabby, are refused admission. The second picture in the mist shows Lenin travelling across Germany, in 1917, by Ludendorff's permission. For four days and nights, between Switzerland and Sweden, he hardly says a word, just broods out the window, the while his carriage-full of companions behave like monkeys in the Zoo, jibbering, skipping here and there.

Lastly, asleep on the floor in the Smolny, Trotsky beside him, on the night of achievement.

How near the Grand Duke Nicholas came to being Tsar in the summer of 1915, may never be known now that he is gone, memoirless. A formidable might-have-been, Nicholas. Recollect that it was this Romanoff soldier who ordered the advance into East Prussia which may well have saved Paris. Recollect, also, that he was clean over the Carpathians in early 1915; and that had he not been criminally let down by his War Minister there might never have come the ensuing débâcle. Even when disgraced to the

Caucasus later, this last of his kind carried all before him. (He died as much of lack of the will to continue living as from the Riviera climate. A few days before he fell ill I chanced to buy a paper in an Antibes bookshop. There was the ex-C.-in-C. of all the Russias listlessly turning over the pages of an antiquated " Illustration." I remembered Baranovitchi fourteen years before. " Do you know who that is? " I whispered to the patron. " Yes, yes," came answer. " Finished. Cœur rompu. They have turned him out of the home he had made near Paris. Not enough money." Later, I learnt that this was true. Nicholas had been given the option of buying his château outright or of clearing out. Which prompts one to ponder that certain people, for all their talk, have strange ways of thanking their friends.)

And so to the Merry Monk.

In the " Staretz " the upheaval of the early twentieth century produced a character on the best Borgia plane and one that should grow and grow in lurid lore as the decades slip by. Yes, I put him in—even if it means keeping currently world-famed figures out. To have provoked such adoration among women and such hatred among men, to have brought a centuries-old régime prematurely tumbling down, were, I venture to think, relative trifles beside Rasputin's achievement in putting to the test the perfectly astounding credulity of his contemporaries and proving that no advance had been made since the dark ages.

> "The saint might get drunk and sin with all sorts of girls and women. But the explanation could always be found if you only considered how the pious man, more than all others, was exposed to the wiles of the devil."

Can you improve upon it?

With Germany our choice is martial from end to end. The Kaiser, Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Falkenhayn, the Crown Prince, Rupprecht, Mackensen; and on the sea, Tirpitz and von Scheer. And I am pretty sure that any German asked to draw up a list would include Immelmann and Richthofen and von Muller and the lad who sent down the *Lusitania*, not to mention von Lettow-Vorbeck.

On closer scrutiny, candidates seem to dwindle to the Kaiser, Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Falkenhayn and Tirpitz. Mackensen, more than seconded throughout by von Seckt, was absolutely unbeaten from start to finish and overran the whole of the Balkans. The Crown Prince we always laughed at (partly because of his face) yet he fought Verdun—against his inclination—and he appears to have been a trifle maligned generally, particularly in regard to war amours and looting. The two were not privy to princes. Nor to Germans.

Preponderant parts as they played, two of the surviving quintette must likewise be passed over: old seadog Tirp, who went nap on U-boat frightfulness thereby bringing in Old Glory, and Falkenhayn, who ran the German War for over two years and inculcated the fatal but so fascinating policy of spreading far and wide . . . nice new German flagpins in new foreign cities for breakfast every morning.

Regarding Wilhelm of Doorn, Ludwig has told us what a vacillating, negative force he was in war but that does not deter him from having stood out *at the time* in the first constellation. We knew so little then, and swallowed everything—even the intelligent among us. For four years, while in actual fact he was in his bombproof villa at Spa or careering madly from side to side of his Empire as the mailed figurehead, and one apparently distinctly nervous about the monster he had unchained and which he never for an instant personally rode . . . while this comparative fading out of Wilhelm-beside-other-days was occurring, the man was being cursed and execrated in a million towns and villages every hour of the day. The one word " Kaiser " came to stand for all the unexampled horror we lived through. One wrote in 1919:—

> The Kaiser set out to rule the world by force; he came within an ace of doing so. And there is one fact of surprising importance to bear in mind. The Kaiser was all along the embodiment of, the living symbol of, the German people. All the racial characteristics of the Fatherland came to a head in him. He was worshipped by his own people—by ninety per cent. of them anyway—and when he sanctioned the murders of Belgium, poison gas, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the deportations of Lille, the Zeppelin raids, the destruction of hospital ships, the martyrdom of prisoners and many another infamy, William the Second had the unstinted support of the German people. Else these things could never have come to pass.

The fault with this is that it suggests transcending power and action in one who, as we now know, never wielded such, rather shrinking from things. The Kaiser's war rôle was exaggerated all through; which may be the main reason he survives so dimly to-day. His star of "outstandingness" set on the Marne.

Remain Hindenburg and Ludendorff.

With that Feste Burg, Alt Hindenburg, we have in late years become so closely acquainted as to render it unnecessary to say much more than that the old, pre-war, retired beer-drinker of Hanover looks like finishing up as a second Wotan. Also, his Hindenburg Line will remain quite an important furrow down the centuries, even as the " Mystery of the Marshes," or " Who Won Tannenberg? " is likely to assume the status of detective fiction if any more names are put forward. Yet we know to-day that Hindenburg was just the façade for Ludendorff, and, proceeding on the basis that where two outstanding figures are linked together as closely as in a three-legged race there is not room for both in such a tiny list as this, Hindenburg must stand down. As for Ludendorff, he has aptly been styled " the Robot Napoleon." He was, all in all, the greatest soldier of the Transition War (into machines). His strategy and tactics may have been at fault, notably towards the end, yet he towered over most of those about him. Indeed, I believe that Ludendorff's ultimate act—his surprising sacrifice in insisting on an armistice when he might possibly have made a bargaining stand on the Meuse-Antwerp line during the winter of 1918-19, a sacrifice resolved upon in order to " preserve the nucleus of the old army for a future revenge "—may yet occupy the full attention of the " Under-thirties " of to-day.

The full French candidates figured early on. Fortunately they are at once reducible to Foch, Clemenceau, Pétain, Galliéni and Joffre. The first two have, of course, got to go in, without more ado. Both were immensely helped by circumstance (the U.S. landings); yet Foch cannot be denied that highest merit in military affairs—genius for reading his opponent's mind and striking at the right moment; while the "Tiger," if only for bridging the winning unified command difficulty and galvanizing his country once more into life in his old trench hat, has his niche for ever . . . as the greatest popular hero France succumbed to (if only for the shortest while) since le petit Caporal himself.

Regarding the extremely difficult admission of another Frenchman, Pétain's claim rests on his defence of Verdun and on his restoration of the morale of the French Army after the 1917 mutinies—a great personal achievement. As for Pappa Joffre, how I should love to include him! I am certain the old gentleman will become a kind of legend—if he isn't getting that way already. For one thing, no one seems to know for certain whether he was a complete washout or a sly old strategist of great lethargy. The nominal victor of the one decisive battle of the War.

And so, lastly, to Britain—and only one place left! Where are we to find room for all manner of (to us) outstanding War figures? For Sir John French, the only British Commander-in-Chief to strike a personal note of affection with his men and one who was in part manœuvred out of his command by the ambition of others? For Curzon the slogging patriot, for "Bonar," for Earl Jellicoe of Jutland and for Earl Beatty of the North Sea; for fine old Lord Plumer who always carried on; for Sir Edward Grey who steered the English barque so high-mindedly; for Mr. Asquith of "we shall not sheathe the sword" fame; for Lord Fisher who gave us the big ships but pulled down his blind; for that first C.-in-C. of the air, Sir Hugh Trenchard; for Sir Roger Keyes and Admiral Wemyss, co-signer, with Foch, of the Armistice; for that great organiser, General Cowans; for Mr. Balfour, whose services in the delicate U.S. tangle were beyond price; for Lord Rhondda who once was said to have "saved England from starvation;" for Botha, and Borden and Hughes, and Smuts; even for K. of K. himself, or for Lord Northcliffe, or for Sir Henry Wilson?

For here is my choice: Mr. Lloyd George. With Earl Haig as runner-up, and Mr. Winston Churchill in third place.

With " L. G.," whatever his performances in peace (I believe it is fashionable to say this) I do not think many will disagree. He first got the shells and then, suiting himself to the mood and rhythm of the nation, drove like fury till the end came. (Without him, France would probably have been scuppered but she detests him to-day.)

To omit the C.-in-C. of ten times the greatest British Army that ever took the field, and to include a D'Annunzio, may appear absurd to many. Yet one has to retain international perspective. To foreigners who may read this book, Earl Haig was no more than a Pershing, a Diaz, a Mackensen, a Galliéni—perhaps not as much.

The writer has always been keenly interested in the personality and record of the late C.-in-C. Enigmas always stand out, and Haig may well provide the most absorbing eventual study after Ludendorff; may well occupy posterity second only to the latter and ahead of the more straightforward, accepted case of Foch. It is futile to be other than frank. While none challenges Haig, the perfect Sahib and devoted servant of his country, both during and after the War, there does exist a division of opinion regarding his tenure of the chief command in France. One view is that, while outwardly self-effacing, he meant to get the command, and that once he got it, he stuck to it too long. The other is that he was the only soldier who could have done the job. The very fact that there endures this dissension of opinion makes its subject stand out and renders it confessedly next to impossible to omit him from the Twelve. Critics insist that he remained remote from his men (forgetting, perhaps, that beau geste at Gheluvelt in '14); that in choosing his associates he put friendship before brains and was unduly loyal to failures; that he was unreceptive, unimaginative, plodding; that his handsome mien and calm belief that he was the only leader, yielded much of that prestige which formed his greatest asset; that no other British soldier could have survived (a) the giving away of the Tanks on the Somme and the continuance of that holocaust which daily killed nearly twice as many attackers as attacked, (b) the refusal to break off Passchendaele which he was solemnly forwarned not even to start in view of the lack of drainage in the Salient and the certain quagmire from big gun fire that would result. Finally, Haig's severest critics go so far as to hint that the C.-in-C. may in part have made his memorable Doullens volte face and have agreed to serve under a foreigner because the alternative was his own supercession, and that in the subsequent glorious Battle of the Hundred Days Sir Douglas was carried forward as much by the surge of circumstance and by " Rawly " as by his own strategical awakening.

Others see things in a very different light. They insist that not once but several times Foch followed Haig's advice during the triumphal last months; that Haig, off his own bat and after being warned from home, took the risk of storming the Hindenburg Line; that he was the only very senior soldier in the field to retain his command from Mons to Mons, a colossal strain; that after the Somme the German Army was never again the same, i.e., that Haig's long-drawn-out pounding was necessary to the ultimate dénouement; that he radiated throughout, the B.E.F.'s spirit of imperturbable carrying on and belief-in-only-one-possible-ending; that he was a cavalier without fear and without reproach and that, all in all, he fitted the circumstances of the campaign as none other could have done.

What a pity it is that Haig's papers are to be hidden away in the British Museum for so long a time yet. Who knows but that they may one day tell a tale tending to tilt things more in his favour, that they may throw light, for one thing, on the exhibition of military tact he contrived to maintain vis-à-vis perhaps the most difficult people in the world to get on with, when there's a war on? Here may well have been Haig's chief service. One wonders what others would have done, for instance, in the exasperating circumstance of Pétain—committed to using the French Army to a minimum degree—one day beginning to give orders to our G.H.Q.! Sir Douglas rounded that slippery curve and many a like one.

For the rest, Lord Kitchener, except for a brief initial six months of monumental greatness, belonged to another military epoch. And of the remarkably wrong but brilliant and sometimes transcendingly right Henry Wilson . . . well, Wilson always sounded to me just too good.

Two civilians required equal debating for a place in the Twelve: Lord Northcliffe and Mr. Winston Churchill.

Viewed from abroad, the former remained a great force throughout. Considered from the continental and American angle, he was probably the best-known Englishman (Irishman!) of the day. He may have been superficial, jumpy, even unduly non-constructive, yet no one ever criticised his motives. Besides sustaining that war mentality which, however much we may profess to scoff at it to-day, *was* necessary to keep the Prussians out of Kent and Sussex, he made his country's effort known to the Allies, he helped to put and keep in power " the men who won the

War" (our War), he risked publishing what French risked telling him about the shell shortage (surely some of the credit, though, should go to French?), he did work in the U.S.A. which House avers has never been appreciated at its due value, and he established propaganda from the skies on a fast-dissolving enemy.

Concerning Mr. Churchill, I have long thought that Winston got what our American friends would call "the rawest deal" in all the War. By going to Antwerp, he contributed to saving the Belgian Army. He has been largely exculpated, by official documents, over the Dardanelles. When he had to go, he went bang into the trenches—forbearing to use his pull at Montreuil like other eminent politicians did. And when he was recalled by Mr. Lloyd George, he developed the convoy system (having long previously pressed for the Tanks, a voice in the wilderness) and all the time he did not cease writing memoranda on the various campaigns which he is perfectly able to publish to-day, so sensible and right do they read. And then, to crown things, he did wonders in munitions—as he is doing to-day as a historian, the greatest by far. From the day Winston sent the Navy "all ready" to sea, to the day he wrote his last memo at the Hotel Victoria, Mr. Churchill was a great War figure, if half of the time off stage.

That he did not tower higher was because so few would listen to him.

As for the absence of all sailors, well, I wish I could put one in. But does one stand out? If Beatty, why not Jellicoe? Or Keyes? Or Carpenter of Zeebrugge? The truth seems to me to be that the Sea War was not an outstanding affair in itself—rather a mournful vigil punctuated by half-hour flashes of brilliance. Had Beatty realised his one wish and fought a culminating battle—ah! things would have been different. But that surrender off May Island—what a tame regatta!

At any rate here is my list, for better or for worse:—

Cardinal Mercier
Nurse Cavell
D'Annunzio
Mata Hari
Lawrence
Woodrow Wilson
Lenin
Rasputin
Ludendorff
Foch
Clemenceau
Lloyd George

a priest, a nurse, a demi-mondaine, a poet, a romantic, a chief of state, a communist, a charlatan, two soldiers, two premiers; one Belgian, three British, one Dutchwoman, one Italian, one American, two Russians, one German, two Frenchmen, with a thirteenth soaring above them all—The Unknown Soldier.

THE OLD LINE GROWS OLDER

"WON'T it be amazing coming back here after the show!"

How many times used one to hear that, in Flanders and Artois, in the days when few men could stand up in either; when at their breasts towered a barrier more final than unending Everest—the Line—on the other side of which lay a world as apart and forbidden as the moon.

To stroll about that mythical, barred world in after years . . . to stand on Thiépval, to motor up Vimy or Passchendaele way! I wish I could convey one-tenth the geographical wonder such thoughts lit up, twelve, thirteen or fourteen years ago. Nor, now that the miracle has been fulfilled, do I think that probable future emotions were over-estimated in those days. Provided one still had the war within one, that one was able again to live precise, appalling happenings at precise, tremendous places, it *was* amazing to stand on Thiépval, it *was* staggering to drive to Passchendaele behind a white horse, it *was* . . . but let me on with my tale, such as it may be.

There are ways and ways of seeing the Old

Line. Private car. Motorcoach. Train-cum-taxi. Some may be able to recapture the past while lolling in a limousine or being shouted at by a guide. Not other people—so we walked, with an occasional lorry-hop, and two memorable drives in ordinary fiacres along the Vimy and Passchendaele Ridges. On the eve of the eleventh anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, we set off from Albert, and on the eve of the tenth anniversary of Passchendaele we arrived at Ypres—three of the most thought-compelling days as it has ever been my lot to spend. Albert to-day is a trying red agglomeration (adopted by Birmingham) with savage splashes of architectural jazz here and there, causing the wayfarer to wince. One small and peppered house alone stands of long ago—the Café de la Musique, by the station. The cathedral with its new golden Virgin will be ready soon, completing the place, a reflection concerning which was this: that should ever again Albert be visited by another war, there will be no lack of " bon for the troops " cafés, bars, and kindred expanding places. After counting fifty-six, we chucked it—and that monstrosity " Yessir, She's My Baby " emanating from almost everyone. . . . Sunday evening in the Cemetery City of the Somme, and the seven and eight-year-olds of 1916 now the dashing local youth and beauty of the dance-halls. Though, perhaps, more interesting than they were the boys and girls of ten and eleven—the war babies. A Cockney touch? The soupçon of a lassie? (No bon, promenade!)

Albert is down to 6,000 population to-day, its chief sources of income being an aircraft factory employing 800 hard-by at Méaulte, and the forging of tools and implements from battlefield leavings. Surprisingly few old inhabitants have returned, this secession being a marked affair all the way up the Old Line—so don't expect to meet with much more than polite apathy from their substitutes, for whom the War was principally a financial affair now filed with Waterloo. The population has changed almost as much as the architecture, a factor which makes it next to impossible to recapture one aspect of the past—the personal one. And yet, how the prospect of coming back in the peace years to look up old friends of village and billet used to loom in those far-off days! To mademoiselles who used to warble:

" Après la guerre finie,
Soldats anglais partis,
Mam'zelle Francais
Beaucoup bébés—
Après la guerre finie! "

Old Bill and Tommy used to stumble:

"Nous . . . après . . . return . . . voir . . . Marcelle . . . beaucoup! Oui, oui," or sounds to that effect.

Well, admittedly it is difficult a dozen years after to keep one's word. Great changes have occurred, socially, along the Old Line. When one asked after so-and-so, may be a famous local character in his (or, more often, her) day, as likely as not the reply came:

"Make much money from the English. Gone away. Bought a property in the South."

Or: "She was a refugee from Lille. She's gone back there."

Or else, dead. Or married and departed. A dozen years is a long time.

Indeed, one's recurring experience was to encounter in Artois and Flanders entirely new faces, villagers and townspeople who had either spent the years 1914-18 behind the German lines or else far away in some refugee corner of France, such as La Rochelle. And, in Artois, and the Somme particularly, masses of foreigners — Poles and Czecho-Slovaks and Russians.

No fewer than half a dozen newspapers are now published in Slav dialect in the industrial country of the North, depending on Lens. Moreover, an entirely new generation of war babies has grown up whose attitude to the war years, to put it mildly, is not one of abounding interest.

The little tots of 1914-1918 who used to sit on Tommy's knee in the billet, are now the Charlestoning jeunesse of townlets that once outshone in fame the capitals of a continent—Hazebrouck, Armentières, Albert—but are now mere townlets once again, gloomy, damp, ordinary provincial centres of stern commercial or farming gain. And hardly the more attractive for their brand-new, red-bricked, standardised architecture.

Now and then, in a café or estaminet or auberge, one may run across an old patron or patronne, and right glad they are to see you, with tales of regret for the vanished khaki army, but it is the exception.

Especially does one search in vain for famous mademoiselles of yore behind the Line—for those vivandières that only France was to produce, those girls we left behind us as we advanced to the Rhine, never to return—where are they to-day?—rough peasant girls, for the most part, yet who rose in war to queen it dictatorially over countless officers and men alike of the B.E.F.

To name but one or two—

Tina of Armentières, she of the crumps and crumpets and unexampled collection of regimental badges. Or "Mam'zelle Jamais" of Lillers, so christened because that used to be her set answer to osculatory advances as made across the zinc?

One recalls, too, the Botticellian beauty and daughter of the house who used to serve in Mony's Boulogne's best restaurant. Sôle Dieppoise! Poulet de Grain! Omelette au Rhum! Georges Goulet, 1906! Ah, those first "binges" at Mony's going home on leave!

And Zozo of Abeele, and the fearful champagne. And then there were the two original mademoiselles of the 6th Division "Fancies," who used to delight all eyes at Poperinghe in 1915 until a silly old General ruled out the feminine sex, to sanction the stickiness of males-in-skirts in their stead.

Also there comes back to mind the flaxen-haired brave Belge who worked the sliding bridge across the canal at Arcq, single-handed, and sometimes kept even Army Commanders waiting while she exchanged quips with passing bargees.

But one could go on thus in retrospect for quite a long while. Each survivor of those days has his own especial memories of mademoiselles behind the lines—" map references" as they used to be called in one army. The idea being that if you found yourself in a certain part of the countryside you would study your map and branch off for a glass of dud champagne with Marie or Marthe or Mathilde —it always had to be champagne. Ghost girls of another era. Married? Maternal? Dead? Disappeared? Or just returned to the soil like Madeleine of the Spanish Farm after that fantastic spell of four years? Or jazzed off to the cities after the mad manner of the time? Yes, probably chiefly that.

Difficult, indeed, to live again the olden days, the same chaff, the same sing-songs, the same promenades!

But we were walking up the Old Line . . .

In the English stillness of dinner-time at the hotel at Albert — following a banquet attended by 110 South African farmers — rippling feminine prattle aided the proper atmosphere.

"I hope you had a nice day. I have had *such* a nice day—that is, I mean a *long* day. A long day is always a nice day to me."

A nice, long day on the Somme.

But there were other women who kept very much to themselves in that room. For battlefield visitors may be grouped—those who come to sightsee generally, patriotic parties visiting certain memorials, and those who come to visit certain graves. Another solo type is the ex-officer, drawn unto himself and tramping to places once held by the battalion. At Albert station such a one turned to me after booking for Contalmaison on the "Petite Vitesse."

"Too damn extraordinary for words," was what he said, "saying 'third-class return Contalmaison.' Sounds as if one were tight!"

And then, of course, there are the Old Comrades looking up old friends and estaminets and pals living on in France, besides visiting graves. A certain joyful latitude is allowed these.

Our trek took us due north through Aveluy Wood; a lovely summer's morning, complete stillness, save for triumphant bird life, but not much doing in the fields on either side . . . those fields whence so many never even got started one July One. Now red cottages and Nissen cafés dot the Authuille Valley, still scarred and smashed to this day. As guide I had a map of the Imperial War Graves Commission displaying about 400 little black squares—military cemeteries—on the Somme alone.

"There's Blighty Valley over there," we would say, indicating a white patch (tombstones) nestling across the Ancre. So, we found our way all up the Old Line, by white patches—

over one thousand of them on either side of us, all told. And what these gardeners have done! Take Aveluy Wood. A repulsive green freak of strangled vegetation stabbed by skeleton trunks. Yet suddenly one comes upon an acre of sheer loveliness, upon a corner of England beautifully mown and sown, verdant and fragrant, lavender and roses on every grave, the whole so peaceful on the little hillside, so certainly forever England. Within, in the visitors' book, we read the messages relatives write.

"Till next year, Jackie." And turning over a twelvemonth: "Till next year, Jackie," again.

Another entry, in a foreign tongue and relating to pound sterling, shocked for its enormity.

Thinking to cut across the Ancre marshland and so up to Thiépval, whose 36th Divisional Tower dominates the entire battlefield, we became bogged in untouched shell-holes and had to turn back; though not before sighting a fisherman ensconced by a huge rush-grown crater.

"What are you fishing for?" I asked.

"Frogs."

From Hamel, after an apéritif in a Nissen café, whose railings were capped by a score of burnished German steel helmets, we branched off up to the Newfoundland National Park—a telling memorial representing a caribou perched high over the exact, still-wrecked trench area whence the Newfoundlanders attacked one famous November day in 'sixteen. Monumentally speaking, I fear the Old Country has a poor showing in France and Flanders, the Dominions having everywhere not only availed themselves of the proudest sites, but also put twice the imagination and taste into their memorials. And yet . . . and yet . . . well, if you want to see the worst, indeed, the only undoctored battlefields that survive along the Old Line to-day, go to Beaucourt Hamel, and think of the Naval Division, and thence stump up to Thiépval and think of some Irishmen.

Viewed from Thiépval Tower, this area of the Somme is desolate, maimed, horrible still, a long way the saddest natural survival, beside which the Ypres Salient is a smiling Flemish countryside. While Poles and Portuguese still hacked up the hillside beneath us, for copper, and a sad wind moaned, and the very air seemed to nauseate as long ago, the caretaker of Ulster Tower, Sergeant Macmaster, shouted: "It's rather bleak and lonely living up here. Five years come this summer with the missus. People aren't coming any more like they used to. Used to have as many as 400 a week. Now it's nearer a hundred."

At Beaucourt the countryside changes entirely—fertile fields of corn and beet and all sign of the Old Line obliterated. So we got on the train and zigzagged up No Man's Land, past Serre, where our tanks crushed our own troops one misty morning, past Hébuterne and Blaireville into Arras. Such a journey, meaning nothing to the local passengers seated opposite, is a kind of unreal, unfolding film to you——

"Miraumont." Germans had a big aerodrome here. "Monchy le Preux." Allenby's cavalry were supposed to fetch up here on April 9th. And so on.

The beautiful pillared squares of Arras have been splendidly remoulded, and a new cathedral, being built by Italians at a cost of 80,000,000 francs, will soon be up. A fine, thriving, well-recovered town. We stayed at the little Hôtel de la Comédie for 18 francs a head, which included dinner, bed and breakfast. Everyone in Arras was polite. In the morning I hired a fiacre opposite the impressive new station, and said, "Fleurus cross-roads. Twenty francs."

"It's fifteen kilometres!" shouted the driver.

"It's nothing of the kind," one was able to respond. "Nearer seven. Know exactly where it is. Bon or not?"

Grunting, the old liar whipped up his steed;

and off we set to drive up to Vimy Ridge, clean up through the old front line.

On top, and led on by the immense white Souchez lighthouse, the French monument commanding this sector, we erred into Canada's National Park, 250 acres of shell-torn, earthquaked Vimy Ridge which France has presented to the Dominion, and which has been reconstructed as a battle-zone with concrete trenches and sandbags and duck-boards, just as it was on April 9th, 1917—that is, except the language. And then, coming to the crest of the Ridge, we saw a wonderful thing: the whole of industrial Northern France spread out far away below, a great red city, newly sprung up, and with Lens as the centre. What a victory sight for the Canadians that must have been, even in ruin, and how right they are to erect their giant memorial on this spot! While monument surveyors shouted the odds in Canadian at one another, we picnicked on Vimy Ridge and tried to pick out Loos (hopeless, lost in the Red Sea), and were hardly surprised that General Horne never made much progress in the First Army area.

And so up the Salient which, I suppose, begins at Armentières (nothing to be seen in the Neuve Chapelle-Laventie area where the British Army stood with its back to the wall one April 12th, not even a minor obelisk to commemorate obedience to Haig's historic order, as far as I could see). Armentières has arisen from its ashes à la rose and rather formidable, style très nouveau, and with the square removed sideways a few hundred yards, which rather baffles the returned wanderer. Every second building: furniture, wireless, bank or garage.

What to say of the old Ypres Salient to-day? We walked all round it in a semi-circle from Messines to Passchendaele, and sometimes when it poured and blew a gale and no one was a-sightseeing, it was sacred, but at other times when cheap Ostend was let loose in rubbernecks (cameras, giggles, guides, and all), well, we slid into wayside estaminets to wait until things grew quieter. In that afore-mentioned Christmas Number, "The Salient," a poet contributor foresaw some of this, though only this doggerel returns as I write:—

> "And when o'er ruins we know so well,
> Night in Flanders has come to dwell,
> The Ypres Astoria will ring,
> With furores from the Ragtime King."

It may not be anything like that, but do not expect to encounter even the ghost of this (also from "The Salient"):—

"Ilium"

"Fair was your city, old and fair
And fair the hall where the Kings abode,
And you speak to us in your despair,
To us who see but ruins bare—
A crumbled wall, a shattered stair
And graves on the Menin Road.

It was sweet, you say, from the City Wall
To watch the fields where the horsemen rode;
It was sweet to hear at evenfall
Across the moat the voices call,
It was good to see the stately Hall
From the paths by the Menin Road.

Yea, Citizens of the City Dead,
Whose souls are torn by memory's goad;
But now there are stones in the Cloth Hall's stead
And the moat that you loved is sometimes red,
And voices are still and laughter sped,
And torn is the Menin Road.

And by the farms and the House of White,
And the shrine where the little candle glowed,
There is silence now by day and night,
Or the sudden crash and the blinding light,
For the guns smite ever as thunders smite
And there's Death on the Menin Road."

Picture a scarless new city, absurdly spick and span in the " old Bruges " style—with a ruin in the centre it is true—but all around, as far as the eye can encompass, nought save snug and brand-new red villages lodged with their steeples in a billowing countryside, as green, as lush, as golden, as blessed and serene as any that can ever have thriven in Flanders. Wipers! The Salient! Beneath these fertile fields, and in the clay of Ypres itself, which it took two years to clear, may repose the bones of fifty thousand unknown British soldiers, and never once may the wayfarer lose sight of a British cemetery, but for actual signs of strife, of battle-most-horrible such as Passchendaele, one has to look very closely, so clean a job have Nature, the Flemish peasant, and the contractor, jointly made of the abyssmal, razed ruin we left.

" This is Hellfire Corner," may proclaim the guide to his motor-coach party from Ostend; but what do the motor-coachers see? A perfectly peaceful and populated cross roads. " On the left —the White Château." An ugly, ordinary, new suburban villa. " And here the Canadians stood up to the first gas attack in history." Where? In that gorgeous cornfield with the estaminets at one end and children playing in the roadway? " Essex Farm, ladies and gentlemen — ten minutes stop for tea." A picnic at one of the unhealthiest spots on the whole Canal Bank! So it goes almost throughout—an utterly unreal world which the old-timer is apt to contemplate semi-bemused. Monuments and cemeteries excepted, only here and there does one come across vestiges of the past. St. Eloi, for instance. Here, on the left where the canal intersects the Lille road, there remains a complete battlefield in miniature—earthquake. The same at Railway Cutting. Also at Hill Sixty. Again, Sanctuary and Polygon Woods are a mass of strangling undergrowth rising in places to twenty feet, with a few valiant veterans of tree-trunks higher still. The general absence of trees is impressive, the baby poplars planted in 1919 being as yet mere striplings. In some places one is asked not to walk on them. Then there are the immense Whytschaete craters of June, 1917. One of these is now a lake fifty yards across and with ducks in possession. But probably the most permanent "leavings" are the German pillboxes and concrete dug-outs stretching right round Ypres on the high ground. The peasants have worked their crops right up to the side of each, but it is the intention to leave them, because they bring tourists.

The roads round Ypres are all of beautiful macadam, quite a park-like effect of sweeping curves and graceful avenues prevailing in the vicinity of the Canadian Rose Terrace memorial above Zillebeke. Only one of the shell-torn war roads in the Salient remained to be completed—that leading down from Passchendaele to Broodseinde. Three or four fields hereabouts have also been voted too bad to touch, but otherwise Poles and Portuguese and Slovaks have " turned the earth over " successfully enough to extract a fortune in copper from it for their masters (an occasional happening has been for these battlefield reclaimers to ensure their hands or arms for a high sum and then deliberately to get them blown off at work). As you circulate in this region the stolid Flems look up from their fields, but they are scarcely interested. Many new villages have three and four cemeteries attached to them—the German ones usually with a big Iron Cross in stone in the centre—but the inhabitants, having recommenced brand-new lives in brand-new cottages and farms, appear wholly unimpressed by the fact of their living on sacred ground. Frugality, religion, thrift, unceasing labour—such are what alone concern them. That 50,000 British died trying to get up a hill they walk up each night is not even touched upon in the local school at Passchendaele; but that the little ones shall always speak Flemish and never Walloon i.e., French) . . . that is drummed into them day after day.

A striking feature is that you may take little trains nearly all over the Salient — out to Kemmel, through Dickebusch, across the Canal at Boesinghe to Langemarck, and out along the Menin Road towards Gheluvelt, on which occasions the booking of tickets (" two second returns Zonnebeke ") still arrests one for its high improbability. As for Ypres itself and the life there, a good deal of the old Flemish cosiness and clannishness pertaining to a time-worn city heavy with history is no more. Every house in Ypres is new. Not a brick in the place is over five or six years old. And the composite result suggested is that the people now living at Ypres appear new, awkward, uncomfortable too —as if this wasn't really their city, and that they knew it, that something irreparable had occurred which not all the architects or home-planners upon earth could modify. Had more of the ruins been preserved . . . ah, but that reminds me of a brigade major, down by the Canal Bank in 'fifteen, who once held forth in this style with regard to the future:

" They should keep this ruddy place as it is. Teach 'em what is was like and stop 'em joy-riding!"

Perhaps they should have.

For us, sentiment, historic sense, remembrance might have dictated so. For the Flemish inhabitants of Ypres, common or garden financial acumen if nothing else.

To-day Ypres is neither one thing nor the other. You cannot erect a brand-new city and expect people visiting it to imagine it is, or was, Wipers. Too much of that name perished with the removal of the ruins it stood for. Yet what a perennial monument was here, and primarily to the armies of the United Kingdom and Ireland, for if all fought here (particularly the Canadians) it was the old B.E.F. which immortalised the Salient in which, moreover, three-quarters of the 250,000 graves being tended to-day indicate English, Scottish, Irish or Welsh regiments, and this not counting the further fifty-eight thousand who lie dead with no known resting-place, and the vast majority of whom must also have been home troops. To this whole army corps of unknown soldiers Lord Plumer chiefly dedicated the new Menin Gate; yet how much more fitting, more wonderful, would have been a simple cenotaph rising in the centre of the ruins of Ypres, in the Grande Place, by the skeleton Cloth Hall!

I was told at Ypres that a certain British officer, holding an important post there when the War ended, had almost to be removed from the scene by force because his exhortations that the central ruins be preserved were not listened to. How the good Flems must bitterly regret their unimaginative obstinacy to-day, when they are seeking to keep every upset stone in position in order to attract tourists, the pre-war industry of the city having languished. For this British officer's plan was simplicity itself. Draw a cordon round the principal ruins in the centre of the city, and then build a new city next door with all the hotels and fine buildings one cared for. Geographically there was nothing to stop this being done, while both sides would have been appeased. Wipers would have remained as a warning and a token. And tourists would have flocked thither as to a new Pompeii. And the good Flems would have benefited accordingly, as they probably deserved to, instead of being in the rather pathetic posture many of them are to-day.

Sometimes one sees the New Ypres referred to as "thriving." Unless my information was all wrong, such is far from being the case. In effect, I was asked by a local official to do everything I could, with a typewriter, to induce English capital across, so that industry might be set a little on its feet again.

"What kind of industry?" I enquired.

"Any kind," was the eloquent reply; and my good burgher proceeded:

"Tell them you can get Belgian labour extraordinarily cheap—about the equivalent of threepence an hour. And female labour for even less. Most of our weaving has gone to England. And a jewel-cutting factory we started has failed. Beer and butter are now almost all we've got. You see, in the old days Ypres was mainly a residential city with a garrison of over four thousand. Well, because of our new arrangements with France, all these troops have now gone to the Liége-Namur area. And a large number of our former residents in easy circumstances have never returned. Simply sold their properties and settled where they drifted to during the War. Ypres, they said, had always been right in the centre of every war, and probably would be again. Now we are mostly taking in each other's washing — about 14,000 of us against 19,000 in 1914. And yet you English could acquire a house and garden freehold in the centre of the city for about £300! And there's Ostend and . . ."

"But surely you appreciate that English people would scarcely like to make their homes in a city around which something like 300,000 of their kith and kin lie buried in 360 separate cemeteries?"

A shrug of the shoulders, and silence. Such was my exchange with one good burgher of Ypres in 1927.

On the other hand, there is no intention of conveying a picture of an under-nourished, listless population. The farming folk roundabout are going strong—in the fertile fields of Passchendaele and Whyteschaete and Gheluvelt—and the city folk, besides having "put something by," are amazingly frugal and non-spending. There they stand at their shop doors (almost every householder of Ypres seems to run a shop or estaminet of some description) pasturally contented as ever in what must be the first all-new city to be erected in the history of the world. Unlike some others, these Flemish War victims are very, very friendly to the British, very remembering. And you only wish that they could have had a happier rejuvenation. But what will you? The Belgian prohibition law has killed café life, with all the animation that such entailed, thereby adding to the dominant impression borne in upon one at Ypres—namely, that you are walking abroad in a strangely silent, depopulated town which, while possessing all the perquisites in the form of sumptuous hotels and restaurants and estaminets and trinkhauser (all terribly new and shining), has, nevertheless, only half returned to life. If it were not for the small British colony, principally engaged in tourist business, even such va-et-vient as there is would not prevail.

However, for two hours each lunch-time in the Ypres season (June-September) it is different—when the motor-coaching tourists arrive from Ostend to " do " the Salient.

Lunch in the trenches (vin compris)
Five bob a head, and then to tea,
Over the way in the White Château,
Graves guaranteed—row upon row.

Well, no—it hasn't worked out like that. Not one bit . . . and yet how much better things would have been if, the ruins remaining, all visitors had been invited to descend and *walk* where ran the old front line of the Salient. —Instead they go whizzing round the place.

Many Germans come to Ypres from their H.Q. by the sea, Blanckenbergh, butterbrodts and Baedekers complete. They are all down the valley of the Meuse as well—where they shot nearly 2,000 civilians at the outset, and burnt whole towns. In Ypres one afternoon I overheard a certain Teuton airily observe to his Frau, as the couple surveyed the new Grande Place:

" I don't see what these people have against us. We gave them a fine new city!" (Eine hübsche neue Stadt.)

Another grim joke of Wipers concerns the recent sale to an American of the battered Cross which used to stand outside the Church of St. Pierre—perhaps the foremost sacred relic of the town.

" Les Américains ont acheté le bon Dieu," it is whispered.

Again, one June day in 1927, General von Hügel, who let loose the first gas attack on Ypres on April 22nd, 1915, turned up on a visit to the town, in the course of which he sought out his old billet people near Zonnebeke.

" And have you still your wife and charming daughter?" inquired the General on the doorstep.

" Yes, and I have also my gun!" rapped out the houseowner, making as if to get same.

Apart from the shell-torn ramparts by the Lille Gate and the Cloth Hall, I saw only one other ruin remaining in Ypres—the old prison as you turn down towards the Canal Bank. How strange it was to cross the Canal and stroll over lush meadows where Skipton Road, one vast communication slush, used to lead up to the alleged front line! Out beyond, too, I tried to locate where Hindenburg Farm once lay, for there one of the jobs of those knowing German used to be to lie out all night up against the German wire trying to overhear what Fritz was saying in his trenches (as likely as not one's report next morning took the form of a series of curses ejaculated by feldwebels or wachmeisters bossing working parties).

Memories, memories! Was ever square mileage so teeming with them? A bock in Essex Farm—served in a real estaminet by a fine-looking English-talking "Promenade-Mademoiselle"! Another opposite Hooge Château where Haig made his beau geste one critical afternoon, riding alone, perfectly uniformed and mounted, at the head of his Staff! And, by the way, a little later, along the same road (I should not have noticed it had I not been afoot), a small slab let into the side of a house. Just a small stone slab—yet what did it commemorate? The stand of the Worcesters at Gheluvelt in November, 1914, which saved Ypres and probably the Channel ports.

A trio of monuments round Ypres that I liked best were the Guynemer stork, the huge Canadian soldier near Langemarck, and the beautiful Canadian rose terraces, rising one above the other at Zillebeke. Always the Dominions!

Wandering about the Salient, this reflection occurred: that if Ypres itself has rejoined normality—a finely-built, decorative, brand-new Flemish town—the Salient never will, not at least for centuries of time. If knowledge-obliteration should occur again, as it seems to have done some time or another since the megalithic menhirs and dolmens of southern Brittany, excavators of the future should have a great time in the Salient, with its pill-boxes and concrete dug-outs, tumble-down monuments, and buried cemeteries, trying to worry out what the whole collection meant.

Thus the Wipers of ten and twelve and fourteen years after.

When " Old Plum " inaugurated its majestic new gateway, did he recall, I wonder, the wag who during a weary march in file from the ramparts to the trenches, once passed back the message:

" *Last man shut the Menin Gate!* "

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